HALLOWEEN 3

(Working Title)

FIRST DRAFT SCREENPLAY
from
ORIGINAL STORY
by
NIGEL KNEALE

CHARACTERS

JOHN CHALLIS (30-40)

ELLIE GRIMBRIDGE (20-30)

CONAL CORCORAN (50+)

BUDDY KUPFER (30)

*****

MARGE BARLOW (45)

HOTEL MAID (55+)

LINDA CHALLIS (35)

RAY BRICKMAN (30-40)

*****

BELLA CHALLIS (9)

WILLIE CHALLIS (7)

HARRY GRIMBRIDGE (50)

HELEN BRICKMAN (35)

JOHN BRICKMAN (9)

JANIE BRICKMAN (7)

HOTEL CLERK (30-50)

HOSPITAL NURSE (40)

CLINIC NURSE (30)

FOLEY (40)

STORE CLERK (25)

RAFFERTY (60)

O'HARA (30)

DOOLEY (30)

GAS STATION MAN (35)

TRUCK DRIVER (50)

KIM

ALSO: BUYERS...PEOPLE IN STORE...HOSPITAL PATIENTS.

1. EXT. DESERT ROAD. DAY.

A MAN is lying at the side of a highway -- one of those roads that stretch without interruption through desert country, straight as a die in both directions.

He is dressed in the ragged remains of pajamas. His feet are bare and bloody. His face is blistered by the sun. But those are the least of HARRY GRIMBRIDGE's discomforts. He twitches and twists in the dust as if he is trying to escape from some overwhelming dread.

INSERT: A face, plunging at him out of the hot sky. It is more like a horror-mask than human, but it is alive so it cannot be a mask. Its mouth contorts, its eyes bulge. It seems to spew out a cataract of loathsome sounds.

GRIMBRIDGE crawls, whimpering, trying to escape what is really in his mind. The noises follow him, inescapable. A grotesque mix of obscene bubbling, animal squealing, farting, hissing....

SUPERIMPOSE: MAIN TITLES

The hissing seems to change....into the air-braking of a heavy truck.

The truck has come to a stop close by, and the DRIVER is already climbing down from his cab.

He goes to the feebly twitching figure of GRIMBRIDGE. At the DRIVER's touch, GRIMBRIDGE shudders with fright and twists round.

GRIMBRIDGE (croaks)
Sam....Samain...!

DRIVER
What you say?

GRIMBRIDGE
Samain!

DRIVER
Okay, Sam, just take it easy now. Let's get you to some help.

He lifts the almost helpless man.....

2. REMAINING TITLES

3. INT. TOY STORE. DAY.

More grotesque faces...some hardly different from the awful image in Grimbridge's mind. But these are made of coloured latex and suspended from hooks. And the sound we hear is not the bubbling, squealing horror but the insistent Muzak being played in a busy store. Quiet, cheerful Irish folk-tunes.

It is the special Halloween display of the toy department. Plastic pumpkins...witch masks...black bats of every size, hung suspended on threads...ghost faces...rubber hands and feet. Above, a broad green banner proclaims: "Silver Shamrock/Special Halloween Offer/Our Trick Is Your Treat!"

The place is full of CHILDREN and PARENTS. The excited CHILDREN grabbing and sampling everything they can lay hands on, their PARENTS following up to put the loot in wire baskets and make resignedly for the checkouts.

JOHN CHALLIS is such a parent. He is a worried-looking man of 30, obliged to keep up a cheerful front for his two children, BELLA (9) and WILLIE (7). This is one of his days of access to them, a reward for his broken marriage. But it has not been fun. They are tired and bad-tempered.

WILLIE
I want a jack-o'-lantern!

CHALLIS
Okay.

BELLA
I want one too!

CHALLIS
Okay, one each.

WILLIE
The big kind!

He grabs a huge plastic orange-colored pumpkin with a moulded face. It is beautifully made and looks expensive. BELLA instantly grabs one too.

CHALLIS
Wait a minute -- how much are they?

A SALES CLERK turns to give him an instant answer.

SALES CLERK
You won't believe it, sir. Fifty cents.

WILLIE
Fifty cents! I want another one!

BELLA
Me too!

They help themselves. The SALES CLERK calls indulgently.

SALES CLERK
Smaller ones a quarter or a dime.

BELLA
Wow!
(as she and her brother grab)
I got one of each. You got one of each? And I wanna witch hat --

WILLIE
I wanna witch hat!

SALES CLERK
(grins at CHALLIS)
Don't worry, dad. All easy on the purse.

CHALLIS
What is it, some kind of promotion?

SALES CLERK
These people --
(a nod at the banner)
Silver Shamrock. Halloween novelties -- jokes and stuff -- I don't know how they do it at the price. It's certainly not junk. Look at this --
(plucking down a horror mask)
Solid quality.

CHALLIS
Yergh!

SALES CLERK
But good! The kids love them.

BELLA
Can I have that?

SALES CLERK (smiles)
See what I mean? Sixty cents.

CHALLIS
(sighs)
Okay.

BELLA
And one for Willie, okay? And I want some vampire bats to frighten my friends at my party. How much are them?

SALES CLERK
Bats -- all prices according to size --

CHALLIS
Willie!

WILLIE is kneeling on the floor, retching. A pool of vomit glistens.

CHALLIS
Oh God, I told him not two cheeseburgers -- !

He dives to help his son. Before he can even grab him WILLIE straightens, grinning -- and picks up the vomit. A large and perfect plastic replica.

WILLIE
Can I have it?

Furious, CHALLIS grabs it from him and flings it back on the nearest shelf. WILLIE wails in rage.

WILLIE
Aw, Dad -- !

4. EXT. STREET OUTSIDE STORE. DAY.

CHALLIS, still smouldering, is leading the CHILDREN. They have all the Halloween toys they can carry, but are not appeased. WILLIE is sobbing.

WILLIE
I wanted that sick! Why didn't you let me have that sick?

CHALLIS
That'll do!

BELLA
God, you are mean!

CHALLIS
(astounded)
Mean!

BELLA
And cruel!

CHALLIS
Look -- I've just bought you all this stuff -- !

BELLA
Mommie says you are and she knows!

CHALLIS
Mommie!

In a rage, he shoves them faster along the sidewalk.

5. EXT. CAR PARK. DAY.

LINDA CHALLIS is waiting in her car, a young woman with a permanent look of dissatisfaction. She glances at her watch, lips tightened. She throws the door open as CHALLIS approaches with the CHILDREN.

LINDA
(glaring)
I knew it! You always have to spoil them!

CHALLIS
It didn't cost so much --

BELLA
It was dirt cheap! He was mean to Willie, too!

WILLIE snivels as they get in the car, pushing and squabbling.

CHALLIS
We had a good day.

LINDA
I bet!

CHALLIS
Two weeks time, then.
(LINDA nods)
Can I come to the Halloween party?

LINDA grimaces. She slams the car door and drives off. Nobody waves to CHALLIS. They are too busy with their presents.....

6. INT. CHALLIS'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

CHALLIS's apartment is minimal, since most of his salary goes to maintaining his separated family. The rented furniture is tasteless and worn.

He sits over a hamburger he has picked up on the way home, and a beer. He is watching a football game on television.

The phone rings. He blips the remote control to cut the TV sound and answers it.

CHALLIS
Dr Challis....
(But it is his wife's voice. He settles down to suffer her complaints with one eye on the silent game)
Linda....please listen, Linda. Just ask Bella what it cost. She kept adding it all up! That kid's so mercenary -- !

7. INT. CHALLIS HOUSE. NIGHT.

The house where he used to live is much pleasanter. WILLIE, wearing a horror mask, is dabbing a spider at his sister, who is sitting in her witch hat unscrewing the head of a doll, wholly absorbed. LINDA has had a few drinks and is now tearfully bitter.

LINDA
(into phone)
It's not the cost, it's the fact you did it! I was going to buy them all the Halloween things -- I'd promised it to myself! You knew that, didn't you? You wormed it out of them -- you bastard!
(almost sobbing)
You -- you deprived me -- of an experience!
(WILLIE and BELLA are listening hard now)
You ignore all my feelings! You always did!

8. INT. CHALLIS'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

CHALLIS has had enough.

CHALLIS
Okay, buy them some more.
(a malicious grin)
In fact, I can tell you exactly what Willie wants --

But she has slammed the phone down. He sighs and puts his back on the hook. He blips up the TV sound, but the football game is over and a commercial is showing.

COMMERCIAL VOICE ONE
(exhorting)
...the Big Bank that is always on your side! We're counting...on your success!

CHALLIS is pouring himself a stiff whisky when the next commercial follows. It catches his attention because the screen is suddenly full of the novelties he bought the children....horror masks...and spiders and bats.

COMMERCIAL VOICE TWO
Three weeks to Halloween! And Silver Shamrock toys are making it the best ever! Look for the Silver Shamrock!
(The logo is filling the screen)
And remember -- our trick is your treat!

CHALLIS turns his back on it and adds a little more whisky to his glass. It has been a bad day.....

9. INT. HOSPITAL. LOBBY. DAY.

Next morning CHALLIS is entering his place of work, a rundown, downtown hospital. It looks old and deprived and dirty. People who get brought here are unlucky.

Several PATIENTS are sitting wearily on a bench, nursing ailments and bandages. CHALLIS, who has a hangover, scowls at them as if they are enemies. A SWEEPER, working along under the bench with a brush, is raising dust all around them, which won't do them any good.

CHALLIS checks a moment while another, collapsed PATIENT is wheeled across in front of him. And a SENIOR NURSE descends on him fast.

SENIOR NURSE
Dr Challis -- you're late.

CHALLIS
I know.

SENIOR NURSE
There's a big list waiting. And the maintenance men are in again.

CHALLIS (sourly)
Oh, terrific.

SENIOR NURSE
One more thing, when you've got a second. Will you run a last check on Mr Mayne?

CHALLIS
Last?

SENIOR NURSE
He's got to go. We need the bed.

10. INT. SMALL WARD. DAY.

The small ward is the size of a cell, with cracked, insanitary tiles and worn-out fittings.

A MAN is sitting in an old wooden chair with his face to the wall. He is in a dressing-gown. He does not move. It is GRIMBRIDGE.

There are the usual noises of an old city hospital -- the wail of an arriving ambulance, clatterings and voices in the echoing passage outside, and now the hammerings of the maintenance men. GRIMBRIDGE is oblivious to all of it.

CHALLIS opens the door. He is in his white coat now, and looks weary at the end of a hard day. He calls back along the passage.

CHALLIS
Okay -- with you in five minutes!
(He closes the door behind him)
Now. Mr Mayne. Sam --

As if it is something he has done many times before, he goes to the man and turns his chair round on its castors. And we see his face. GRIMBRIDGE's eyes are half-closed and his features look somehow shrivelled, as if from disuse.

CHALLIS
Feel like talking today? Ever?
(Taking the record sheet from the bed end)
Know how long you've been with us?
Nearly five months.

No reaction from the man in the chair.

CHALLIS
"No known address, no personal possessions...." Two visitors. One looking for a Howard G. Main, one for Victor Mainz. You weren't either of them.
(He tosses the card on the bed)
You're all healed up and they're going to throw you in some bin. Unless --
(Moving closer, he flips a hand across the man's eyes, but they do not blink.)
Sam --
(He frowns.)
Let's try something.
(He is not sure how to go about it. He speaks quietly, concentratedly.)
You're sleepy. Go to sleep, Sam, shut your eyes and sleep. You can't keep them open.
(The eyelids quiver)
That's it, shut your eyes and sleep. Sleep....sleep.
(The eyes close. The lids tremble but stay shut. CHALLIS has to control his excitement. He hardly knows what to do next. This is the first response he has ever got. He looks towards the door, half inclined to call someone else in to see it. Then he decides to go on.)
Do you hear me?
(The eyelids quiver.)
Right. When I snap my fingers you will wake. You will remember everything about yourself.

He raises his hand, hardly daring to do it. After a few seconds he snaps his fingers.

The man's eyes open.

For an instant there seems to be no change. Then, as if welling up from the back of his mind, comes a look of consciousness. The eyes widen. They look about, aware. And with the awareness come quick confusion and something that seems like alarm. The man sits up in his chair.

CHALLIS (quickly)
Okay now, just give it a chance -- it's coming back --

The man is staring at him and the surroundings. His breathing is suddenly faster. His mouth works as if struggling for words.

GRIMBRIDGE
Where -- where -- ?

CHALLIS
You're in hospital. You were hurt.

GRIMBRIDGE
(suddenly anxious)
My cameras -- all my stuff --

CHALLIS
All right, all right --

GRIMBRIDGE
Got to go -- an assignment --

CHALLIS
(firmly)
Easy now, Sam.

GRIMBRIDGE
Sam?

CHALLIS
You see, I know your name, but where d'you come from?

GRIMBRIDGE
Not Sam. Name...Harry Grimbridge...

CHALLIS
I thought it was Sam Mayne, never mind. Let's see if you can remember where --

But the other is staring at him with an expression of growing terror.

GRIMBRIDGE
Samain? (He shudders) Samain?

His whole body seems to shake. CHALLIS puts a steadying hand on his arm but he shakes it off. From somewhere there comes a rapid tapping that may be part of the maintenance men's labours.....or may be inside the room. CHALLIS hardly has a chance to glance round to see when there is a much louder, explosive crack.

The window shatters.

CHALLIS grabs at the man in the chair, to pull him to safety. But now tiles come springing off the walls, flying like small missiles. CHALLIS ducks.

GRIMBRIDGE gives a painful croak of fright. The whole room is in motion. Bedsheets rise as if a wind has formed beneath them. Another window smashes. Medicine bottles leap and shatter.

And the sounds that come with all this are the dreadful obscenities that pursued GRIMBRIDGE in the desert...the cavernous bubblings and squeals and hisses.

The air is full of plaster dust and fragments. CHALLIS has been hit. There is blood running down his face, into his eyes.

GRIMBRIDGE is on his feet, rigid.

As the sounds swell to a peak he gives a long shriek. Then, in a moment, everything is still. The awful noises cease, and there is just the patter of small fragments falling.

GRIMBRIDGE pitches forward on his face.

CHALLIS crawls over to him, hardly aware of excited voices in the passage, and the door being flung open, and people rushing in.

GRIMBRIDGE is dead.....

11. INT. APARTMENT BUILDING. LOBBY. DAY.

In the dingy, peeling lobby of a walk-up apartment house, there is a line of mailboxes.

One of them bears the name "Harry D. Grimbridge".

It is about ten days later, in a different town. CHALLIS is standing alone in the lobby, studying the mailbox for the lack of anything better to do while he waits for somebody.

Then she comes in at the front door. A GIRL a few years younger than himself, quite slight and pretty.

ELLIE
Dr Challis?

CHALLIS
Yes.

ELLIE
I saw you at the inquest, of course. Giving evidence.

CHALLIS
It's good of you to meet me.
(He hesitates)
I'm suspended.
(Awkwardly)
I want to find out more. If I can.

ELLIE
I'll show you his things.

She leads the way up the stairs.

12. INT. GRIMBRIDGE'S OFFICE. DAY.

It is the office of a modest freelance photographer, old-fashioned and untidy. On the walls are big enlargements of what Grimbridge must have considered some of his best shots...mostly sporting events, grab shots from football games, a horse race, an aircraft display, a few portraits of poor quality and surprisingly, a big picture of some kittens.

There is a clutter of lampstands and boxes. A small desk. A door marked "Dark Room/No Admittance".

CHALLIS follows ELLIE in.

ELLIE
Well, that's it.
(as CHALLIS starts looking about)
I wasn't very close to my father. Didn't see much of him. He liked to be on his own. So do I.

CHALLIS
His cameras --

ELLIE
Missing. He must have taken them.

CHALLIS
On that assignment, wherever it was. Miss Grimbridge --

ELLIE
My name's Ellie.

CHALLIS
He must have kept some kind of engagements book?

ELLIE
He did. It's in here.

She finds it in the desk drawer. CHALLIS takes it and flips through the pages.

ELLIE
It's sad. He filled it up with football games and things he might go to. Fact is, he didn't get much to do.

CHALLIS
Last entry, "High School game, July 16th."

ELLIE
He never made even that. I posted him missing the end of June.

CHALLIS
(frowns)
Only then?

ELLIE
Well, that's when I -- I mean, I'd called him up a few times and then I came around here and --
(He is turning pages quickly back. Then he stares.)
What is it?

CHALLIS
May 5th --

ELLIE
That far back?
(Then it dawns on her)
Oh, wait a minute --

CHALLIS
They picked him up on May 7th, in the desert.

ELLIE
Let me see!
(she grabs the book)
"May 5th...Meet Bob 10.30...go Sun Hills...."

CHALLIS
Who was Bob?
(ELLIE shrugs)
Not...Sam Mayne.....?

13. INT. ELLIE'S ROOM. NIGHT.

CLOSE SHOT of television set displaying the latest Silver Shamrock commercial. To the accompaniment of an Irish jig, Jack-o-Lanterns and Witches and Horror Faces are bouncing merrily about.

COMMERCIAL VOICE
Ten days to Halloween! Make it the biggest and best of all time -- with Silver Shamrock! Look for the Shamrock on every item!
(There it is, filling the screen now)
Remember -- our trick is your treat!

Another commercial follows....but the CAMERA PANS to CHALLIS and ELLIE in a huddle. She blips the sound off.

ELLIE
You got kids?
(He nods)
How many?

CHALLIS
Two.
(His face hardens. He sits up.)
I'm going to that place.

ELLIE
Sun Hills? It sounds like -- I dunno -- a commune?

CHALLIS
Maybe. You want to come?

She thinks. Then she nods.....

14. EXT. HIGHWAY. DAY.

A rented car with CHALLIS and ELLIE in it is driving fast along a highway.

15. INT. CAR. DAY.

ELLIE has a map spread open.

CHALLIS
You didn't like your father?

ELLIE
Mm -- (She considers) -- I think mainly he didn't like me. And you know what started it? A bird.

CHALLIS
How so?

ELLIE
He bought me this bird in a cage. For my birthday, big deal. I was six. One of those little red-nose kind, he looked so sad he wouldn't tweet. So...I dug him out and slung him out the window. Like that --
(It is still vivid to her, and the gesture is vivid too.)
So he could tweet in the sky. My dad lathered me, real good. He should have known.

CHALLIS
Known what?

ELLIE
A girl never forgives lathering. Like a cat doesn't.

She goes back to the map. CHALLIS gives her a long look. Very different from Linda, this one.

CHALLIS
How are we doing?

ELLIE
Next turnoff, I think. I think.

16. EXT. HIGHWAY JUNCTION. DAY.

CHALLIS swings the car off the highway on to a secondary road....

17. EXT. ROAD THROUGH HILLS. DAY.

Now the car is climbing. It is pleasant country, green and soft.

18. INT. CAR. DAY.

ELLIE is frowning over the map.

ELLIE
We ought to be nearly there.

CHALLIS
We are.

ELLIE
What?

CHALLIS
I can see it.
(he grins)
Your hippy commune.

He slows to a stop. ELLIE looks out...and giggles.

19. EXT. SUN HILLS COMMUNITY. (CAR POV) DAY.

Nestling in a bowl among the hills is a cluster of dwellings. And a few larger buildings. It looks idyllic.

20. INT/EXT. CAR. SUN HILLS. DAY.

A few minutes later they are approaching the little town by a winding road. A huge sign is mounted right across it --

"WELCOME TO SUN HILLS COMMUNITY!
THE HOME OF SILVER SHAMROCK!"

CHALLIS
Silver Shamrock --

Almost immediately he has to switch his attention fast to a big articulated truck, coming fast and needing room. It has a big Silver Shamrock logo painted above the cab and, as it roars past, they see an even bigger one on

its side, with the words "SILVER SHAMROCK NOVELTIES".

ELLIE
The toy factory?

CHALLIS
Seems like it. Hey -- !

He tucks the car quickly into the side of the road to give clearance to another big truck, moving even faster than the first. It too is painted with the Silver Shamrock logo.

21. EXT. SUN HILLS. GAS STATION & STORES. DAY.

CHALLIS trickles the car to a halt at a small gas station on which the name "RAFFERTY" is prominent. It looks tidy and neat, with trees all around.

ELLIE (surprised)
You need gas?

CHALLIS
Good place to ask things.

The owner, presumably RAFFERTY, is dealing with a car in front of them. There is more traffic here, cars passing -- and now two more trucks with the Silver Shamrock on their sides, heading out of town.

On the other side of the road are several little stores. "MOTHER O'GRADY'S COOKIE SHOP"....."LEPRECHAUN GIFT STORE"....."IRISH KNITS".

ELLIE
Kind of ethnic.

CHALLIS
Say that again....

RAFFERTY, pocketing money, comes beaming towards them.

RAFFERTY
Top o' the mornin' to ye!
Fill her up?

CHALLIS
Yeah.

RAFFERTY
A grand day, so it is. The sun smilin' down on Sun Hills, lookin' after its own!

It is too much. ELLIE sinks down in her seat to hide a smile.

CHALLIS
I wonder if you could help me --

RAFFERTY throws out his arm, pointing down the road.

RAFFERTY
That way!
(Grinning broadly)
Sure, isn't everyone askin' me the same thing? An' me tellin' them -- just folley round, just keep on folleyin' yer nose --

22. EXT. HOTEL CAR PARK. DAY.

CHALLIS is still bemused as he drives up to a temporary barrier across the road. A uniformed ATTENDANT (with JIM FOLEY embroidered on his chest, so he is Irish too) is cheerfully diverting the growing traffic into an already crowded car park.

ELLIE looks to CHALLIS. He shrugs.

FOLEY
Come on, dear man -- ye're holdin' up the world! This way, now -- !

He waves CHALLIS firmly into the car park.

There are vehicles of all sorts and sizes here. Besides cars there are pickups, jeeps, trucks, station wagons and vans -- many bearing the gaudy names of toy stores in various cities.

As CHALLIS and ELLIE get out of the car, a big van shoots into place beside them. It is painted luridly all over by the hands of an enthusiast, with monsters and exploding stars and the like, and in big Dayglo lettering: "BUDDY'S BEARGARDEN/NOVELTIES AND JOKES". A MAN comes tumbling out of the driver's seat. He is huge, cheerfully overweight, bulging out of his Western outfit. It is topped with an extravagantly feathered cowboy hat.

BUDDY (gleefully)
Hi! Isn't this terrific? Aren't we lucky? All the way I been telling myself, soon be there, Buddy! My name's Buddy Kupfer, Buddy's Beargarden, San Diego --

He has hauled his bag out of the van and is grabbing at their hands with a huge paw while he babbles on like an over-excited child.

BUDDY
What outfit are you with? You been here before? I never have but I always wanted to -- I mean, this place! It's got to be truly sensational -- it always is, they say! Soon as I got the message I said drop everything, this time you go! Hurry now -- let's not miss any of it --

He is beckoning them between the cars. Other PEOPLE who have just arrived are heading the same way -- towards a broad building about three floors high, built like a country club. It carries it name in bright lights even by day: "SUN HILLS HOTEL".

BUDDY
(a whoop of delight)
Yow-woweee!

23. INT. HOTEL LOBBY. DAY.

High up, two mechanical, sheeted Ghost figures are swaying and gyrating, one at each end of a banner reading "SILVER SHAMROCK SPECIAL/WELCOME TO ALL BUYERS". To the accompaniment of some kind of Irish jig.

Below, the hotel lobby is crowded. MEN and WOMEN, most of them self-consciously dressed and wearing identity plates on their chests as big as postcards. A few have donned red noses and funny wigs, which are available free from stand baskets.

At the Reception Desk a harassed CLERK is dealing with late arrivals. BUDDY KUPFER pushes his way to the front.

BUDDY
You got me there? Buddy Kupfer, San Diego --

CHALLIS and ELLIE stare around them. A yard away, two plainly dressed LADY BUYERS are trying to fit horror masks over their hair-does. A MAN passes with the face of a pig over his own, grunting happily.

ELLIE
What the hell is it?

CHALLIS
Some kind of sales drive -- ?

An obscene SANTA CLAUS jigs by, his nose flopping over the pointed cannibal teeth that grin between his whiskers. And a blind EASTER BUNNY with mange, its heavy backside emitting monstrous farts. The watching BUYERS applaud delightedly. Yells of appreciation.

ELLIE
Let's find some place else --

They are both struck fast and lightly over the head -- by a bladder on a stick. It is BUDDY KUPFER again.

BUDDY
Quick, my friends -- I stood in line for you!
(He calls)
Found them! Here they are!

CHALLIS finds himself propelled towards the desk by BUDDY's sheer weight.

CHALLIS
Wait a minute --

BUDDY
They take care of everything, they just need your name.

CHALLIS
I've got to explain --

CLERK
What party d'you represent, sir?

CHALLIS
There's some kind of misunderstanding -- listen --

CLERK
Be quick, sir.

BUDDY
Give your name.

CHALLIS
Challis, John Challis, but --

BUDDY
And the lady --

The answer is jerked out of CHALLIS before he can think. To protect her.

CHALLIS
Mrs Challis.

CLERK
(frowing at his list)
Sorry, I don't seem to have --

CHALLIS
I'm just trying tell you --

Another voice cuts in. Heavy, authoritative, Irish.

CORCORAN
Now what's the problem?

He is an impressive figure, a natural boss man. Bulky, florid, with the black hair and brilliant water-blue eyes of his race. Full of smiling charm.

CLERK
Sir, I just don't seem to --

CORCORAN
Fix it, Danny, we can't have argument. It's not the day for it at all.
(Extending his hand)
I'm Conal Corcoran. You're welcome as my guests, and I hope your stay's a...a merry one, so I do.

CHALLIS
(uncertainly)
Well -- thanks.

CORCORAN
My great pleasure, sir.

He moves off into the crowd.

BUDDY
(struck almost speechless)
That was <u>him</u>!

CLERK
Himself.

He busies himself with I.D.plates. BUDDY looks in disbelief at the blank expressions of CHALLIS and ELLIE.

BUDDY
(incredulous)
Didn't you know? You mean you really didn't? How do you stay in business? That guy is Silver Shamrock -- he is the all-time genius of the practical joke! He invented sticky toilet paper!

ELLIE
He what -- ?

BUDDY
(despairing)
You must know! The Dead Dwarf gag? The Soft Chain Saw? All his!
(turning)
I've just got to get a word with him -- say how much I --

He trots off. Gusts of soft mechanical laughter, like that from a laughing-bag, are wafting through the lounge now, and proving infectious to the BUYERS.

The CLERK holds out keys and I.D. plates.

CLERK
Mr Challis...Mrs Challis.

CHALLIS
Oh, thanks --

He draws ELLIE a yard or two aside, in the lee of a six-foot Jack-O-Lantern rocking on its axis.

CHALLIS
(whispers)
I didn't want you to give your name.

ELLIE
Meaning his name.

CHALLIS
(nods)
Just in case.

ELLIE
You really want to stay?

CHALLIS
I don't know. Let me try this my way --

He glances round the grotesque scene. Some of the BUYERS are trying to out-laugh the loudspeakers. A few yards away BUDDY KUPFER is reverently shaking CORCORAN by the hand.

CHALLIS goes back to the desk.

CHALLIS
Can you help me? Uh -- a friend of mine was here some while back. His name's Grimbridge, Harry Grimbridge.

CLERK
I trust he had a pleasant stay.

CHALLIS
He thinks he left something behind.

CLERK
Oh yes?

CHALLIS
Uh -- a camera. It was last May.

He waits, trying to read the other's expression.

CLERK
It would have been returned to him.

CHALLIS
It wasn't. So -- if you'd just check and find his name in your records -- ?

CLERK
Not right now, sir.
(New ARRIVALS are waiting)
Perhaps you'd come back later?

CHALLIS
Okay.

He and ELLIE turn away. PEOPLE are drifting towards the elevators.

CLERK
(calls)
Grimbridge?

ELLIE starts involuntarily. CHALLIS catches her wrist.

CLERK
That was the name you said?

CHALLIS
Yes --

CLERK
Gimme a couple of hours.

BUYERS are drifting towards the elevators now.

LOUDSPEAKER VOICE
Silver Shamrock Special...don't forget the working brunch, one o'clock in the Galway Room....

It seems most natural to drift along with the rest...

24. INT. ELEVATOR. DAY.

BUDDY KUPFER is the last, and heaviest, to push into the elevator.

BUDDY
Room for a little one?
(He grins at CHALLIS)
Oh, that wonderful guy! He really is the king!

The closing of the elevator doors actuates some circuit. There is a long, loud farting noise...followed instantly by two joke VOICES.

VOICE ONE
Who said that?

VOICE TWO
Not me!

VOICE ONE
It was!

VOICE TWO
It was not!

VOICE ONE
I know your voice!

An even louder fart. Some laughs from the BUYERS. BUDDY KUPFER roars.

BUDDY
Oh, I love this! Terrific!

The doors open -- and there, almost filling the gap, is a huge horror-face. A few mild shrieks from the FEMALE BUYERS. The face dodges away on human legs.

BUDDY
(ecstatically)
Wow-wow-WOW! See you later!

Along with some of the other BUYERS, he bounces out of the elevator.....

25. INT. HOTEL ROOM. DAY.

CHALLIS lets himself and ELLIE into a room that matches expectations. A lot of green shamrocks in the decor, wallpaper and bed covers. Pictures of Galway Bay.

ELLIE
My God, that fat guy!

CHALLIS
(frowning)
You know...it was him that got us in here.

ELLIE
Oh, John --

CHALLIS
He did.

He crosses to the window and looks out at the little town. ELLIE joins him.

ELLIE
It's pretty.

CHALLIS
(slowly)
You know....all this corny Irish thing...you know what's funny, I mean <u>really</u> funny?

ELLIE
What?

CHALLIS
Well, they're supposed to be great on religion, aren't they? Rosaries and all that stuff?

ELLIE
I'll buy it.

CHALLIS
Can you see a church anywhere?

A tapping at the door. CHALLIS turns.

CHALLIS
So long as it's not the Dead Dwarf gag, whatever that is --
(He calls)
Come in!

The door opens. An elderly, rosy-cheeked MAID appears, carrying crisp towels.

MAID
(Irish too)
Och, I'm disturbin' yez, I'd not do that for the worl' --

CHALLIS
It's okay.

MAID
It's just the fresh towels --

She disappears into the bathroom. CHALLIS exchanges a look with ELLIE, crosses to it. As she comes out the old woman nearly bumps into him.

MAID
Oh, bless me -- !

CHALLIS
I just wanted to ask you -- about Mr Corcoran --

MAID
Aw --
(almost too quickly)
Conal Corcoran, isn't he the great boy! D'you know, it's him that's made this town what it is today! Before he come it was nothin' at all. He built the toy works. He built this hotel, so he did! Everythin'! He's a lovely man!

CHALLIS
D'you say prayers for him?

MAID
(devoutly)
Oh, I do, I do! An' glad to!

CHALLIS
Where?

The MAID is struck with slight confusion.

MAID
What's that ye say?

CHALLIS
Where do you pray? Where's the church?

The confusion deepens. The MAID looks from one to the other. Then she brightens.

MAID
Sure, it wasn't needed no longer. The people had fell away after th'old priest died, and --

She seems to check herself.

CHALLIS
What happened to the church?

MAID
(after a moment)
Sure, they pulled it down. Why wouldn't they? Its day was done.
(Uneasily)
I must get to me work -- or they'll be after me --

She makes for the door. CHALLIS finds a dollar from his pocket, but she shakes her head.

MAID
No, sir. No.

She goes.

CHALLIS
Well...!

A subdued gong-note sounds, and a voice from some hidden source in the room.

LOUDSPEAKER VOICE
Remember, all guests of the Silver Shamrock Special...working brunch, one o'clock in the Galway Room.

CHALLIS
Do we go? Better brush up --

He goes into the bathroom -- and fumbles in the darkness.

CHALLIS
Where the hell's the switch -- ?
(mutters)
Must be when you shut the door. That kind -- !

And bangs it shut.

26. INT. BATHROOM.

The bathroom is full of blood!

The bright light picks out a scene of utter horror. There is blood in the wash-bowl and blood in the bath. It streams down the walls. It is spattered across the ceiling, dripping noisily.

And echoing hollowly, like a sound from the ends of Hell, comes the voice of a child.

CHILD'S VOICE
(screams)
Daddy! Help me, Daddy -- !

Then CHALLIS screams too. He turns and claws at the bolt he has just shot --

27. INT. HOTEL ROOM. DAY.

-- And flings himself out of the bathroom. He stands with the last of his cry still issuing from him, and then choking. Struggling to get his breath again.

ELLIE
(in fright)
What happened! John!

She runs and grabs him.

CHALLIS
Oh God, in there -- ! Don't go!

He clutches at her but she pulls free and goes to look. She stands in the dark doorway and peers about.

ELLIE
I can't see anything. What was it? John?

CHALLIS can hardly get a word out. He is knotted up with the horror.

Then she goes into the bathroom and shuts the door behind her.

CHALLIS
Ellie -- !

He forces himself towards the bathroom door. Before he reaches it, it opens -- a momentary blink of electric light inside, then dimness. ELLIE is standing there facing him, looking puzzled.

ELLIE
There's nothing.

He goes to look. Peering about in the dimness, he sees clean, shiny surfaces...his own pale face in the mirror.

He turns back into the room.

CHALLIS
There was....blood....

He shudders.

He makes a sudden dive towards the drinks fridge, fumbling with the key and snatching it open. He grabs the first bottle to hand.

ELLIE watches the gulping figure uneasily.

ELLIE
You thought you saw --

CHALLIS
I did see!

ELLIE
(going to him)
When you were with my father... when he died...and you said you saw things and you heard things that...Well, they didn't believe you, they suspended you.

CHALLIS has steadied.

CHALLIS
Do <u>you</u> believe me?

ELLIE
I don't know.

He puts his arms round her, one hand still clutching the bottle.

CHALLIS
Because otherwise...you've come here with somebody who is crazy.....

28. INT. HOTEL LOBBY. DAY.

There are few people in the lobby when CHALLIS and ELLIE come out of the elevator.

Two BUYERS in throwaway wigs are studying the Wall Street Journal. A WOMAN BUYER is frowning over a clip-board. The obscene SANTA CLAUS has fallen asleep in an armchair with the EASTER BUNNY, who is possibly female, lying across his chest.

The same CLERK is on duty at the desk.

CHALLIS
Did you manage to find out -- ?

CLERK
I did, sir. Nobody of that name has stayed with us in the past year.

ELLIE
(helpfully, to CHALLIS)
He could have been mistaken.

CHALLIS
Is there any place else?

CLERK
The Highlands Motel.

CHALLIS
Where's that?

CLERK
About...thirty miles north.

ELLIE
(to CHALLIS)
Try the police?

CLERK
Police? Here?

ELLIE
Don't you have any?

CLERK
No call for them. No crime, no problems. Just Highway Patrols passing through --
(He breaks off)
Was your friend in some trouble?

Before either of them can answer there is a yell from across the lobby.

BUDDY (beaming)
Hi, there! You forgot your bags in your car, so I brought them in -- good ol' Buddy, always the willing helper! How about that!

He puts the bags down. A nondescript one belonging to CHALLIS. The other, in worn, soft leather, is painted across with her name,"Ellie Grimbridge". For all to see.

The CLERK's expression is curious. He snaps his fingers to a PORTER.

CLERK
Take them up. Room 317, right?

CHALLIS
Yes.

BUDDY
Now what about this brunch? Yum, yum, yum...!

29. INT. GALWAY ROOM. DAY.

A BUYER with a plateful of food sits down by one of the many tables. His chair cushion emits a shriek, the eldrich wail of a banshee. The startled BUYER spills some of his food before recovering his professional composure and grinning at those round him. He picks up the cushion and shakes it knowingly.

BUDDY
That's a great sound, know what I mean? It's got class.

He is at the buffet, heaping his plate with more food than should be possible. CHALLIS and ELLIE are with him, picking among the bowls.

BUDDY
No, I mean that. I've had whoopee cushions without any real audio content. But never from Silver Shamrock. Now --

He turns to study the BUYERS at the tables. One of them is waving to him.

BUDDY
(calls)
Hi, Stuart!
(dropping his voice)
Stuart Behr, he's washed up.
Over here, I think --

He moves off in another direction.

ELLIE
(despairingly)
John -- !

CHALLIS
What's the use? He'd find us.

He follows BUDDY, who has found a table. There is a WOMAN sitting at it already, a slight, middle-aged buyer with dyed-black hair.

BUDDY
Hi, Marge!

MARGE
(not overjoyed)
Buddy Kupfer --

BUDDY beckons the others over.

BUDDY
This is John and Ellie.

MARGE
Hello, John and Ellie. I'm Marge Barlow, Guttman Toys, Kansas City.
(Peering at their I.D. plates)
They haven't filled yours out, never mind. I think I'm in the room next to you. I saw you in the passage --

BUDDY rises in his seat to wave to somebody else.

BUDDY
Hi, Dottie! Hi, Jeff!
(sitting)
You know, just about everybody's here.

MARGE
What would you expect? This is Mecca --

BUDDY
Dublin --

MARGE
Anyways, the capital! These guys have taken the whole trade!

BUDDY
Look at this, look at this -- !

From a capacious pocket he pulls a large black rubber spider and wags it at ELLIE. She yelps.

MARGE (moved)
Aw, sweet! She can still react --

BUDDY
(ignoring this)
Dutch, made in Amsterdam! Now what the hell kind of a spider is that? It's crap! But look here --

From his other pocket he brings a spider of horrifying naturalism, with yellow-and-brown hairy legs and glistening eyes. ELLIE shudders.

BUDDY
Silver Shamrock -- perfect!

ELLIE starts on her food so as not to look at the thing. BUDDY produces a large plastic splash of vomit.

BUDDY
Marge, look at this. Ever see a throwup like it? All the bits -- carrot, corn, meat -- you see every single thing the guy ate!
(He drops it on top of the heaped food on his plate)
Anybody would swear I had sicked all of that up!

MARGE
Silver Shamrock?

BUDDY
Of course!

CHALLIS
Mr Kupfer --

BUDDY
Who's Mr Kupfer?
(Joke look around, then thumps his chest)
Buddy -- per-lease, John!

CHALLIS
Buddy, d'you mind -- ?

BUDDY
Oh -- sure, sure, sure!

He plucks the plastic vomit off his food and starts to dig into it with his fork, wolfing it and talking through the mouthfuls.

BUDDY
(to MARGE)
I don't buy from Amsterdam no more. They sold me itching powder wouldn't make a dog scratch! And the Germans -- they used to be good, but now -- !

MARGE (nodding)
This is where it's at.

BUDDY has filled his mouth too full to speak. He can only nod vehemently.

Music bursts from loudspeakers. An Irish jig, acting as a fanfare. There is excited attention from all the BUYERS. Heads turn -- as CORCORAN and two other MEN enter at a run, along a shallow dais to give them prominence. CORCORAN is wearing huge rubber hands with hairy backs and blood on them, which he waves at his appreciative audience. His companions have their faces covered with horror masks. Otherwise all three are dressed respectably and expensively in business suits.

Applause from the BUYERS. CORCORAN finds his microphone.

CORCORAN
Good day to you, friends. For any that don't know me already, I'm Conal Corcoran. My associates -- Sean Dooley --
(DOOLEY rips off his horror mask, to reveal a bland smile)
-- and Padraic O'Hara.
(O'HARA does the same.)
We want to welcome you to this special buyers' jamboree!

He and the other two clap their audience in turn. Everybody is very happy. BUDDY KUPFER is getting excited again. He jumps to his feet.

BUDDY
A question, sir!

CORCORAN
Ask away.

BUDDY
How come you're all Irish here?

CORCORAN
Ah.
(Glances at his colleagues)
Are we? I suppose we are.
Well, first of all we can't help it.
(Laughter)
Second, it's kept us out of politics. Think of it -- you might have had me in the White House! And me with blood on me hands!
(Holding up his rubber-gloved hands and waggling them. More laughter.)
No, what happened was....this was a dreamy little bunch of bums that had strayed from the bogs of Ireland ...and I booted the poor souls into prosperity!

Much applause from O'HARA and DOOLEY. CORCORAN frowns with mock severity and points a rubber finger at his audience.

CORCORAN
Now I'm going to do the same for you! Have you all got your order forms?

BUDDY leads the applause.

BUDDY
He means it, he means it!

O'HARA and DOOLEY are busy arranging samples of the Halloween toys on the table beside their boss. The Jack-o-Lanterns in three sizes, the horror-masks and bats on sticks, the witch hats.

CORCORAN
Eight days till Halloween. This is the last big push. Can we do it between us? Is it not too late?
(Some cries of "No!")
D'you know how many of these have gone out? Altogether, nearly thirty million!
(Gasps of amazement)
And most of them sold! As you know.

CORCORAN
Now -- can we shift another ten million in a week?
(Whistles of disbelief)
We can! Because I'm putting on the biggest TV campaign ever! The kids'll watch -- and those kids'll buy -- because you'll be giving the stuff away. As good as.
(Dead silence now, as he points to the displayed items one by one.)
Wholesale prices. To you, down from 25 cents to five. From 15 cents to two. From 10 cents to one. And you'll still get a reduction for cash!

BUDDY
(mutters)
This is just crazy -- !

MARGE
He can't -- !

CORCORAN
Give me your orders. I guarantee delivery in 24 hours, anywhere in the country. You think I can't do it? Come and see my factory -- right now!

CHALLIS, to his own surprise, finds himself on his feet.

CHALLIS
Mr Corcoran --

CORCORAN
Ah, Mr Challis...of...what is it, Challis Novelties?

CHALLIS
Why are you doing this?

CORCORAN
Why? I was never a grandfather, or a father for the matter of that. So this Halloween...I've a private ambition. It's to put a toy in the hand of every kiddie in America.

Applause breaks out almost violently. BUYERS jump to their feet. BUDDY bursts into loud whistles, fingers to mouth. CHALLIS slumps back into his chair...and finds himself about the only one sitting down...apart from ELLIE....

30. INT. FACTORY. PUMPKIN LINE. DAY.

To a muted roar like that of a heavily muffled motorbike, plastic pumpkins come pouring from the delivery end of a huge enclosed machine. They glisten in a cooling spray. They bounce and shuffle like fruit from a washing-plant.

CORCORAN is at the simple controls, demonstrating to the pressing, curious crowd of BUYERS. He slows the rate to a steady put-put-put.

CORCORAN
Each explosion inside means another one moulded. Maximum forty thousand per hour.

He turns the control to full. An almost continuous roar, so that he has to shout over it as he points along the line where the pumpkins have disappeared.

CORCORAN
Through there they get the faces on them! All the last touches!

Far down the line O'HARA leans in and plucks out a couple of the finished product, with eyes and nose and grinning mouth....

31. INT. FACTORY. BAT LINE. DAY.

Piled as high, and as black, as coal on the delivery line of a mine...come plastic bats. BUDDY KUPFER can't resist running forward to grab up handfuls of the things and wave them about.

BUDDY (squeaks)
Eeek! Eeeek! Eeeek!

CORCORAN
(catching up, along with the BUYERS)
Buddy, you're a child yourself.

BUDDY
(happily)
The secret of my success!

32. INT. FACTORY. CONTROL UNIT. DAY.

Sitting at a 6-foot hugh bank of master controls is a

solitary MAN in a dustcoat, checking readings and flicking switches. He has his back to CAMERA.

As CORCORAN leads the BUYERS into shot the MAN turns. He is an Oriental of remarkable thinness.

CORCORAN
This is Mr Kim, the exception to the rule!
(A few laughs. KIM rises, grinning, and bows. He is very tall.)
We've a twin factory in Korea to supply some bits and pieces. Now -- this is the master control and he's running the whole show. He can switch any production line in a second -- to Santa Clauses, Easter Bunnies, Doggy-Poos, squirters, dead rats -- you name it.

CHALLIS
Blood?

CORCORAN
What's that?

CHALLIS
How about blood?

CORCORAN
Sure, by the pint, gallon or tanker-load.

CHALLIS
Blood that vanishes?

CORCORAN
That's harder but I'm sure we can. Eh, Mr Kim?
(KIM nods and grins. To CHALLIS:)
Ask him in Korean, he'll give you particulars.
(Moving on)
Yes, it's full automation we have here....

33. EXT. FACTORY YARD. DAY.

Then they are outside. The factory yard is full of big fiber packing cases, some stacked high, others being loaded into trucks with the Silver Shamrock logo. A dozen WORKMEN are busy heaving them about.

CORCORAN
-- And only a score of men in the place, most of them packers. Look at them, hard at it on your behalf --

BUDDY
What's in there?

He is pointing to a building across the yard. It is smaller than the main factory and on the door is painted "STRICTLY NO ADMITTANCE".

CORCORAN
(Smiles)
Secrets.

BUDDY
Prototypes?

CORCORAN
That'd be telling --

BUDDY
(Excitedly)
Surprises? Stuff for next year? Come on, let's have a look. Confidential, I promise --
(Hand on heart)
They all promise. Aw, you can't refuse us -- !

CORCORAN
I can and I must --

But BUDDY is already trotting across the yard. CORCORAN suddenly catches O'HARA by the arm -- and O'HARA runs. He is a lot fitter and faster than KUPFER and he gets there first. The sliding door, as CORCORAN saw, is slightly ajar. O'HARA slams it in BUDDY's face and stands, smiling, with his back to it.

BUDDY is put out for a moment. Then he shrugs and clowns about as he goes to rejoin the other BUYERS. At the tail of the line --

CHALLIS
Ellie --
(She turns)
I've found the church.

ELLIE
Where -- ?

He points to the ground they are standing on. Half hidden by grime and the scatter of industrial waste there are flagstones with engraved lettering, worn almost away. "Sacred to the Memory of Sarah Connolly, 1818-1902, R.I.P."....."In Loving Memory of Patrick Joseph Ryan, 1841-1895, A Devoted Father"... and others too, less distinct.

CHALLIS looks up at the slab side of the factory.

CHALLIS
Why here? Why build this here....?

34. INT. HOTEL. GALWAY ROOM. NIGHT.

That evening the BUYERS are celebrating in the Galway Room.

Drinks are on the house and they have been going down fast. As the loudspeakers pour out a jig, the staggering BUYERS are doing their best to dance to it. Some of them are wearing funny wigs, others monster masks -- which impair their vision dangerously. BUDDY KUPFER is one of these. His face is hidden in an ogre-mask but he is recognisable by the cowboy hat on top of it, and which he never takes off even at meals. He is staggering about with a glass in his hand.

He waves a paw at MARGE BARLOW who is going past.

BUDDY
Dance, Marge --

MARGE
Buddy, I can't dance a jig.

BUDDY (dancing)
It's easy -- !

MARGE
And neither can you.

Which BUDDY instantly proves by falling over a table. MARGE shakes her head at ELLIE and CHALLIS as she goes by.

MARGE
I told him! Well, g'night, I'm going to bed --

CHALLIS glances after her -- and notices O'HARA and DOOLEY standing together by the doorway. A moment later they are joined by KIM, the immensely tall Korean, now dressed in a sharp business suit. The two Irishmen seem to snap to attention at the sight of him, with quick grins and little nervous gestures.

BUDDY, still sprawling, pulls the ogre-face down from his own.

BUDDY (giggles)
Hey -- I've thought of a great publicity stunt. Rent a plane and drop half a ton of itching powder on -- say, Minne -- Minneapolis. Or sneezing powder. Or itching powder one day and sneezing powder the next. Like in the Bible --

A gong-note. The lights dim, a beam stabs dramatically down -- on CORCORAN in the middle of the room with a microphone in his hand.

CORCORAN
And now, good people -- have you put all your orders in?

Drink-fuddled cries from the BUYERS.

BUYERS
I sure did! Broke my record! The all-time high! My boss'll kill me!

BUDDY
(saluting)
I did, sir -- !

CORCORAN
Anybody that missed -- be quick about it. Hand them in tonight. Because here -- is how we're going to do the selling for you!

The spotlight snaps off. And half a dozen strategically placed TV screens light up -- with a new commercial. It shows the same factory products -- the spinning, jumping Halloween figures -- but this time there is a jingle of blunt directness.

JINGLE SINGERS
Eight more days to Halloween,
Keep watch on your TV screen!
Jack-o-Lantern, Ghost and Witch,
We are going to make you RICH!
Buy -- Silver Shamrock!

Some questioning cries from BUYERS.

BUYERS
How's that? Get rich, what's that about? Who's supposed to -- ?

CLOSE SHOT of TV screen as a second commercial follows fast. This time the FIGURES seem to peer out more directly, the horror-masks being simply animated like puppets.

JINGLE SINGERS
SEVEN days to Halloween!
This is what it's going to mean --
If you buy us you are wise!
You are sure to get a prize!
Buy -- Silver Shamrock!

35. INT. HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT.

A few minutes later CHALLIS is pacing up and down the hotel room, thinking furiously. ELLIE is sitting on the bed watching him.

ELLIE
John -- it's just a gimmick!

CHALLIS
Okay, it's just a gimmick.

ELLIE
It's the sort of thing they do all the time. Somebody does.

CHALLIS
Not like this. They're putting those commercials out twentyfive times a night! On all channels!
(He halts)
Have you any idea what that costs?

ELLIE
P'raps he didn't mean --

CHALLIS
He said so! You heard him! Big prizes too, that's the payoff. And meanwhile they're giving all the toys away, as good as. Make any sense to you?

ELLIE
Maybe he's going crazy. Like some old millionaire, giving all his worldly goods --

CHALLIS
Corcoran?

ELLIE
I like him.

CHALLIS
Okay --

ELLIE
I do. There's something about him that --
(She frowns)
D'you know what I think? If something is wrong...suppose he's being taken? You know, conned? You notice that big guy, the Korean? I don't trust him!

CHALLIS shrugs, having already thought the same thing. He goes to the drinks fridge and rummages.

ELLIE
(thoughtfully)
D'you think my father did come here...and stumbled on something?

CHALLIS
No ice.

ELLIE
And got caught --

CHALLIS
I'll get some ice.

He picks the ice-bucket off the fridge and goes. ELLIE humches herself up on the bed, in tense speculation.

36. INT. PASSAGE. NIGHT.

There is an ice-machine at the end of the passage. CHALLIS shovels cubes into the bucket and shuts the lid.

As he starts along the passage back to the room there is a gust of revelry from somewhere. BUYERS having a last fling.

Passing the room next door he hears a voice call out to him. It is MARGE BARLOW.

MARGE
Oh, Mr Challis...John...can you spare a moment?

CHALLIS
Sure.

37. INT. MARGE BARLOW'S ROOM. NIGHT.

He follows her inside. On the bed is a scatter of Halloween toys. She has one of them in her hand -- a plastic pumpkin.

MARGE
(nervously)
I just had to talk to somebody.

CHALLIS
What is it?

MARGE
I was just holding this and kind of fiddling with it and -- that little logo thing, the Silver Shamrock badge, you know -- it came off in my hand.

For an obtuse moment CHALLIS thinks she wants him to fix it.

CHALLIS
I guess it just needs some adhesive. Right now I'm not able --

MARGE
I don't mean that. Look -- it came in two pieces. And there's something inside.

She shows him.

INSERT: C.U. Logo, the little silver-colored trefoil in MARGE's fingers. She pulls it apart... and contained inside it is a minute mechanism, no bigger than the head of a thumb-tack, yet visibly complex.

MARGE
D'you know anything about electronics?

CHALLIS shakes his head. She lowers the magnifier she was about to offer him.

MARGE
Well, I do, a bit. There's a micro-chip in there, and the smallest fuel-cell I ever saw, and --

CHALLIS
What about the others?

He glances at the toys scattered on the bed. She has pulled all the logos off.

MARGE
There's one in all of them. I've looked.

CHALLIS
(remembering)
"Some bits and pieces..."

MARGE
What?

CHALLIS
Nothing.

MARGE
(holding up the tiny shining thing)
To make that, my guess is at least $50. And it's stuck in a plastic pumpkin that sells for 20 cents! Crazy!

CHALLIS
Some kind of bugging device?

MARGE
Who's going to bug kids' toys? Thousands of them, if they're all like this, millions!

CHALLIS
What then?

MARGE
(shrugs)
Some colossal, monumental mistake. Intended for something else. Some mixup.

CHALLIS
I wonder --

MARGE
In case it is that --
(Firmly)
I think I ought to tell them.
Warn them --

CHALLIS
Hold on, Marge --

MARGE
It could send them bankrupt.

CHALLIS
Just let me think this over --

MARGE
Which would be an awful pity.
They're a good outfit.

CHALLIS is at the door, picking up the ice bucket.

CHALLIS
Talk to you in the morning, okay?

MARGE
Right.

CHALLIS
Early.

He lets himself out.

38. INT. PASSAGE. NIGHT.

He finds his own door shut. He raps on it. After a moment it opens -- and ELLIE is staring at him, wide-eyed.

ELLIE
Where have you been? What happened?

CHALLIS
Next door. Marge, wanting to talk --

ELLIE
(with dislike)
Oh, her! John, I got so scared -- !

39. INT. HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT.

She is shaking. CHALLIS sees it is no time to go into what Marge said. There is a sample Halloween toy -- a monster-mask -- on the table and he picks it up, fiddling with the Silver Shamrock logo.

ELLIE
I was thinking about it all and -- there is something crazy going on, I know it!

He finds it, the concealed scrap of metal. He slips it into his pocket without comment. He licks his lips.

ELLIE
Do you -- (She swallows) -- do you think they hurt my father?

CHALLIS
We'll get out of here first thing tomorrow.....

40. INT. HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT.

It is an hour or two later. The room is dark.

CHALLIS and ELLIE are in bed, arms round each other but sleeping uneasily. He is dreaming, muttering to himself faintly and incoherently. He shakes his head with a flicker of pain crossing his face. It is a bad dream --

THE DREAM

41. INT. CHALLIS HOUSE. DAY.

We are back in CHALLIS's house, but he is not visible since it is his dream. The CAMERA takes his point of view instead.

What it is seeing, in a wide angle, is a meal time, with LINDA, BELLA and WILLIE all sitting round a table and staring straight at CAMERA (= CHALLIS).

LINDA
Look, John -- don't take it out on me!

BELLA
No, don't you dare!

LINDA
If you hate your work so much, have the guts to give it up!

BELLA
Doctors are supposed to make people better!

LINDA
You've got to like people to do that -- and he doesn't!

BELLA
Daddy makes them worse!

LINDA
Call it a day!

BELLA
Daddy, you are the pits!

WILLIE
Pits! Pits! Pits!

LINDA
Get out of our lives!

The tablecloth is suddenly snatched up, blotting out the faces and scattering crockery to shatter noisily --

42. RESUME -- HOTEL ROOM.

CHALLIS starts up. He is clutching the edge of the sheet.

It wakes ELLIE, frightening her.

ELLIE
What is it?

CHALLIS
Okay. A nightmare I get sometimes.

He lies back, breathing fast. Her arms go round him. After a few seconds he holds his breath, listening to something.

ELLIE
John?

He is still listening. There is the faintest, almost subliminal sound. Like something muffled by driving through the thickness of a wall...

CHALLIS slides out of bed and grabs his trousers. Still listening but not at all sure whether what he heard was real or an echo of the nightmare. He pulls on his shirt.

ELLIE
(drowsily)
Where are you going?

CHALLIS
It's okay.

He listens again. Nothing. He pulls on his shoes anyway, having got this far. And goes to the door. And listens again.

Suddenly he is sure.

He flings the door open.

43. INT. PASSAGE. NIGHT.

In the passage the sound is clear. A high, steady, almost inhuman wail that goes on and on. It is coming from the room next door.

CHALLIS
Marge!

He thumps on the door, then looks round for something to force it with. He grabs a heavy fire-extinguisher and slams it against the lock. It yields.

44. INT. MARGE BARLOW'S ROOM. NIGHT.

The room is fully lighted.

Sitting in a chair is what must have been MARGE BARLOW. Now it is a red monster. The wide eyeballs are the colour of blood all over, the pupils gone. And through all the straining skin surface, blood seeps as if being driven outwards by some terrible internal force. The whole body shakes as violently as a man gripping a pneumatic drill. The dyed-black hair flutters ridiculously. The mouth is wide open, distended forwards and torn ragged by the blasting exhalation that has snapped off teeth and rendered lips into streaming filaments. And from it comes the steady, inhuman shriek.

It is as if the whole life-force of the woman has been turned inside out and set to expelling itself. There is no intake of breath, just the dreadful exhaust-roar that, strangely, has only a small effect on the things in the room. The curtains ripple. Some hotel notepaper on which MARGE has evidently been scribbling has drifted to the floor.

A lamp lies on its side, overturned in the first convulsions. Beside on the table lie Halloween toys...the Silver Shamrock logos removed from them and opened up....a small radio from which the batteries have been removed, and the batteries themselves....and paper clips and hairpins. She has evidently been experimenting.

Adding a banal touch, the television set is on, showing a small-hours Western.

For some seconds CHALLIS can only stare in horror at the shuddering shape in the chair. Then he recovers enough to drag the cover off the bed and throw it round her. She does not react. She seems not to realise he is there.

Then ELLIE appears in the doorway, pulling a dress on. And freezes, appalled at the sight.

ELLIE
My God!

CHALLIS snatches up the phone and rattles the receiver rest.

ELLIE
What's happened to her?

CHALLIS gets a reply. He shouts into the phone, above the droning cry from the chair.

CHALLIS
Can you get an ambulance?
There's a woman here -- she's
had a kind of seizure --
(He shouts)
Just get help! I'm bringing
her down!

He slams the phone back. He turns to MARGE and wraps the bed-cover tighter, lapping it across the dreadful face. He forces himself to lift her from the chair.

45. INT. PASSAGE. NIGHT.

ELLIE runs ahead down the passage. CHALLIS follows, struggling to control the jerking, shaking body of MARGE BARLOW in his arms. The steady, dire wail continues from the woman's ruined lips.

Behind, one or two bedroom doors open. Sleepy, fuddled BUYERS peer out.

ELLIE has the elevator waiting.

46. INT. ELEVATOR. NIGHT.

Inside the confined space of the elevator the impact of MARGE's condition is even more terrifying. ELLIE flattens herself against the wall, steeling her nerves against it. And CHALLIS keeps the face covered.

Then they are down.

47. INT. HOTEL LOBBY. NIGHT.

The NIGHT PORTER is there to meet them as they emerge from the elevator. A grey-haired, sluggish man.

CHALLIS
Are they coming?

NIGHT PORTER
What's the trouble -- ?

CHALLIS (sharply)
Did you call an ambulance?

NIGHT PORTER
Ambulance --

CHALLIS
For God's sake, man --

NIGHT PORTER
Bad, is she?

CHALLIS lets the cover slip. At the sight of MARGE's face the NIGHT PORTER gives a little moan.

CHALLIS starts with her towards the front door.

NIGHT PORTER
There's no hospital --

CHALLIS
What!

ELLIE
There must be!

NIGHT PORTER
Only the clinic, that's all.
That's all there is --

He is wringing his hands helplessly as they get to the door.

CHALLIS
Ellie, get the car.
(to the MAN)
Now, where is it -- ?

48. EXT. HOTEL. NIGHT.

The NIGHT PORTER holds the door open for CHALLIS to carry MARGE out.

The car pulls in with ELLIE at the wheel. CHALLIS pulls and kicks the rear door open. He gets the increasingly limp body of MARGE in and huddles beside her to hold her steady on the seat. ELLIE leans across and slams the door.

The NIGHT PORTER has not come to help. He is still standing in the hotel doorway as they drive off.

49. INT. CAR. NIGHT.

The fierce hissing wail has died away. It is as if MARGE's condition has gone into some secondary phase. Her body is still racked with a steady shuddering but it is less violent. Faint, formless croaks come from her throat.

They are clear of the hotel now. CHALLIS is watching the turnings between the rows of neat houses.

CHALLIS
Straight on. That's what he said.
Then left at the crossing --

50. EXT. SUN HILLS. STREETS. NIGHT.

The car with ELLIE at the wheel turns at the crossing, past a couple of small, moonlit stores...."O'Brien's Hardware"....."Shaughnessy Fashions".

51. INT. CAR. NIGHT.

CHALLIS
It should be along here on the right --

ELLIE
I can see it.

She pulls in.

52. EXT. CLINIC. NIGHT.

The Sun Hills Clinic is very unimpressive. A box-like building that looks as if it could hardly contain more than a dozen patients at one time.

But there are lights in some of the windows.

CHALLIS throws the car door open and heaves the stricken woman towards it. ELLIE scrambles to help him. It is only when he gets outside with the gruesome burden in his arms again that he fully grasps the state ELLIE is in. She is frantic with terror, yet holding herself together by sheer will-power. She is on the edge of cracking.

CHALLIS
Go back.

ELLIE
Coming with you --

CHALLIS
(firmly)
Ellie. Just see we get inside, then go. I want you to do that. Back to the room and stay there. Right?

She nods. He starts up the few steps to the double doors. They open at a nudge. He glances back. ELLIE is making for the car, glad to be let off.

53. INT. CLINIC. NIGHT.

Inside the clinic there is a reception desk with its light on, but nobody in attendance. Further along the passage there are glows from the night-lamps on the small wards.

CHALLIS sees a trolley. He lowers MARGE carefully on to it. She squirms feebly at the contact.

CHALLIS
All right, Marge --

He pushes the trolley over to the reception desk, steadying her body. He presses the buzzer several times, fast.

CHALLIS
(Shouts)
Anybody there?

A NURSE appears. A stout, wholesome-looking woman in middle age, her cast of features Irish again.

NURSE
Who are you? What's this about?

CHALLIS shows her.

She reacts. Not quite as sharply as he expected. Perhaps it is her professional training, or perhaps --

CHALLIS
Ever seen that before?

NURSE
(A fractional hesitation)
No. Whatever did it? Burns?
It must have been burns --

CHALLIS
It wasn't.
(He starts moving the trolley)
Emergency treatment -- which way?

NURSE
We haven't got a doctor here --

CHALLIS
I'm a doctor.

54. INT. CLINIC. INTENSIVE-CARE UNIT. NIGHT.

It is an hour later.

CHALLIS has settled MARGE BARLOW into an oxygen tent, and is making the last adjustments to a blood-drip. Her lids are shut now, covering the awful eyeballs, and there are bandages on the ravaged mouth. She seems collapsed.

CHALLIS lifts the plastic sheeting and moves outside. He is wearing protective clothing, which he now peels off. The NURSE is tidying away other apparatus and bottles.

NURSE
You've done all you can for her.

Again, the ambiguous comment. It could be merely sympathetic...or it could be loaded, with knowledge.

CHALLIS
Keep up the ice treatment. If we can just get the temperature down -- from that crazy level --

NURSE
I'll watch it.

CHALLIS
Where can I make a phone call?

NURSE
Through there --

CHALLIS closes the door after him.

55. INT. CLINIC. ANTE-ROOM. NIGHT.

CHALLIS goes quickly to the phone and dials. Through the glazed door he keeps an eye on the NURSE, but she seems to be going on with her work steadily.

CHALLIS
(Into phone)
Room 317.....Ellie? She's still alive, only just.
(Conscious of the hotel line)
I don't want to say too much. Wait till I see you.

56. INT. HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT.

ELLIE sits huddled in a chair. She looks frightened and vulnerable.

ELLIE (into phone)
John, are you okay?....Listen, I won't panic or anything, I've gotten over it now, depend on old Ellie!.....
(Slightly taken aback)
If you say so, sure. Right away.
(Lightly)
Take care now, I love you.

She puts the phone down. And does what he told her, going straight to the door and locking it with the dead-bolt....

57. INT. CLINIC. ANTE-ROOM. NIGHT.

CHALLIS has replaced the receiver too. He goes to the door and looks through at the shrouded figure of MARGE. The NURSE seems conscientiously busy.

He goes quickly back to the phone and starts dialling again.

58. INT. CHALLIS HOUSE. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

His wife LINDA is fast asleep when the phone rings beside the double-bed she now only occupies half of. She wakes confusedly and fumbles for it.

LINDA
Yes?.....Who is that?...John!
(She sits up, quickly)
What do you want? Is this some kind of -- !
(Angry now)
Are you aware that you did not show up at the weekend and I had those kids on my hands -- !

59. RESUME -- CLINIC ANTE-ROOM

CHALLIS
Okay, okay, I'm sorry! Linda, this is important!

60. RESUME -- CHALLIS HOUSE BEDROOM

LINDA
Do you know what hour this is?

61. RESUME -- CLINIC ANTE-ROOM

CHALLIS
(Carefully)
I do. I'm sorry. Linda, you know those things I bought for the kids the other day? The Halloween things? I want you to burn them.

62. RESUME -- CHALLIS HOUSE BEDROOM

LINDA
(Incredulously)
You -- what? Burn your precious gifts? Daddy gives out of the bigness of his heart -- and Mommie burns them! Just what the hell d'you think you're trying to set up?

63. RESUME -- CLINIC ANTE-ROOM

CHALLIS
(Desperately)
Linda, I mean it! They may be dangerous! Just destroy them!

64. RESUME -- CHALLIS HOUSE BEDROOM

LINDA
You're drunk! You've been drinking all night and you've had this brilliant idea to louse me up with my kids! Go to hell!

She slams the phone down. Then, so as not to be disturbed again, she takes it off the hook. She looks up. WILLIE has come into the doorway. He is wearing his Halloween mask as well as his pajamas.

WILLIE
Who was that?

LINDA
Nobody, Willie...

65. INT. CLINIC. INTENSIVE-CARE WARD. DAY.

It is daylight.

MARGE lies comatose in the oxygen tent. There is no sign of the NURSE.

66. INT. CLINIC ANTE-ROOM. DAY.

In the ante-room CHALLIS sits crumpled with his head on his arms. He has dropped asleep from sheer exhaustion. Now he stirs. He lifts his head -- and stares in total astonishment.

CHALLIS
Uh? It can't be....Ray?

Leaning against the wall opposite and watching him with faint amusement is a MAN about his own age. He is wearing a doctor's coat.

RAY
Hi, John.

CHALLIS
What...what are you doing here?

RAY
Work here.

CHALLIS
I haven't seen you since..since...

RAY
Not since medical college. I've been standing here thinking about it. You snore, d'you know that?

CHALLIS is on his feet. He grabs RAY's hand, suddenly swamped with relief at finding a friend.

CHALLIS
This is so good -- !

Then he remembers. He looks anxiously through at MARGE.

RAY
Your patient's going to make it.

He follows CHALLIS.

67. INT. CLINIC. INTENSIVE-CARE WARD. DAY.

CHALLIS turns the plastic sheeting aside. He puts a hand on MARGE's pulse. He frowns. He turns down the sheet. What can be seen of her skin, between dressings, is the same scarlet color.

He turns up her eyelid. The eyeball is unaltered, blood-red.

Her breathing is hardly perceptible.

CHALLIS
(returning to RAY)
You really think -- ?

RAY
I think you saved her. She'll be out of here in an hour. They're picking her up.

CHALLIS
(relieved)
Oh, great! I mean, it obviously needs special treatment --

RAY
She'll get that.

CHALLIS
Have you had other cases?

RAY
A couple.

CHALLIS
What!

RAY
From the factory. It's some kind of chemical poisoning.

CHALLIS
Oh no --

RAY
That's what they said.

CHALLIS
Ray, I've got to talk to you --
(Then it seems to dawn on him properly for the first time that he really has someone to talk to, and he grasps RAY's arm)
This is so good, you can't believe. Ray Brickman! If there's one person in the world I would have -- ! It's such a relief!

RAY
Come back to my place, have some breakfast, meet the family --

He leads the way.

68. INT. CLINIC. PASSAGE. DAY.

CHALLIS follows RAY into the passage.

CHALLIS
You got kids?

RAY
Two. Boy and a girl. What about you?

CHALLIS
The same....

69. EXT. BRICKMAN HOUSE. DAY.

RAY BRICKMAN's Porsche pulls in and he and CHALLIS get out.

CHALLIS
(appreciatively)
Great car.

RAY
(grins)
I had to get it. They pay me too much.

CHALLIS
Lucky bastard.

But it explains something about RAY's presence here, and his work.

RAY
(with pride)
Well, there it is.

The house is not very big, but extremely attractive. There is a sort of rightness about the shape of it, and the placing of it. The site has evidently been picked carefully. There are no other houses nearby, and it has been built among mature trees.

CHALLIS
I like it. Just exactly the sort of place I --
(he breaks off)
The trees and everything.

RAY
All except this one. It's dead. And ugly. It's got to go.

He slaps a bough of the offending tree. It is right in front of the house and since it is completely leafless, an eyesore.

RAY
I'll cut it down and grub the root out. I may need some help. What about it?

CHALLIS laughs with him as they make for the door.

70. INT. BRICKMAN HOUSE. LOBBY. DAY.

Inside, the house has the same attractiveness. The colors of the fabrics, the choice of furnishings, everything shows skill in choosing, an enjoyment of it all.

RAY lifts a child's tricycle out of the way, kicks a football aside.

RAY
Kids. I don't need to tell you --
(He calls)
Helen? You there? I've brought another mouth to feed --

71. INT. BRICKMAN HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY.

HELEN BRICKMAN is already busy with breakfast in the kitchen.

RAY
Honey, this is John Challis.
I found him up at the clinic.

HELEN
John -- ? You were together at
medical college --

CHALLIS
(surprised and pleased
that she has heard of him)
That's right.

HELEN
I feel I know you.

She takes his hand, smiling. She is a beautiful woman. CHALLIS can hardly take his eyes off her. Every movement she makes, even if it only pouring coffee or cooking eggs on the stove, is strangely arresting.

RAY
Sit down, John. He's staying
at the hotel.

HELEN
(amused)
Oh, that place --

RAY
He thinks there's something
wrong there. Something bad.

HELEN
What?

CHALLIS
It may be more the factory. The
toys -- you know --

RAY
Tell her.

He takes his wife's hand as she stands beside his chair. Clearly they are very close in everything.

CHALLIS
From what I've been able to find
out, some of the toys are kind of
bugged, not to transmit information
of course, that'd be crazy, but...
to hurt.

RAY and HELEN exchange glances. There is a quick protectiveness in her face.

HELEN
Which toys?

CHALLIS
All I know about are...the Halloween ones.
(Another exchange of glances between the couple)
They've got a sales drive going on there and last night -- there was this woman -- she -- she's in the clinic right now, she was nearly dead, she's all -- all --

RAY
Take it easy.
(To his wife)
I've seen her. John, you can't stay in that place.

CHALLIS
I was going to leave today but -- there's so much more to -- I can't just --

HELEN
You're coming here.
(He stares at her)
You're going to stay with us.

CHALLIS finds himself moved. And confused at the same time. Suddenly it all pours out in a muddled stream.

CHALLIS
You're so good but -- you see, it's not just me, there's this girl, she's called Ellie -- she's there, it was her father, you see, that's how it -- I was treating him -- I've been suspended! I've got to tell you, it's all a mess -- my marriage -- we broke up last year -- my wife quit, she couldn't take any more, she said -- and the kids --
(to HELEN)
We've got two kids but --

RAY
What about the kids?

CHALLIS is too choked to manage more than a dismissive gesture.

HELEN
Bring your girl.

RAY
Right! Then we'll go into this whole business together. We'll find out exactly what --

He breaks off as a BOY about nine years old comes into the room. Handsome and intelligent-looking, neatly dressed.

HELEN
Good morning, John.
(To CHALLIS)
This is our John.

RAY
We always liked the name, see.

HELEN
(to the BOY)
Meet another John -- Dr Challis.

BOY
Pleased to meet you, sir.

He shakes CHALLIS's hand solemnly.

HELEN
John, I want you to do something. Find all those Halloween toys and bring them here.

BOY
Okay, Mom.

No arguments, he just goes. In the doorway he passes a little GIRL aged about seven. She is struck with shyness at the sight of CHALLIS, and runs to her father. RAY hugs her. A beautiful little creature, very like her mother.

RAY
This is Janie.
(to the child)
He's an old friend of mine called Dr Challis.

CHALLIS
Janie --

The little GIRL beams at him, gap-toothed. And RAY puts a sympathetic hand on his shoulder.

The BOY comes running back into the room with an armful of Halloween toys, Jack-o-Lanterns and witch hats and bats. No monster faces -- it is as if they wouldn't have had anything ugly. He hands them over to his mother. HELEN shoots them straight into the trash can.

There is no objection from either child. Little JANIE, on her father's knee, is turning her attention to breakfast. Now her brother sits too, and smiles up at his mother as she sets a plate before him.

To CHALLIS it is like a dream. Almost too good to be true, and almost too much to bear. He is deeply moved. They are all looking at him, smiling, making him welcome.....

72. INT. HOTEL. PASSAGE. DAY.

CHALLIS comes running along the hotel passage -- and encounters the elderly MAID coming out of their room with a tray of used breakfast things.

MAID
Good morning to you, sir.

He glances after her, then goes inside.

73. INT. HOTEL ROOM. DAY.

He finds ELLIE sitting on the bed, her knees drawn up under her chin.

ELLIE
I got hungry so I called up room service. Where were you?

CHALLIS
(carefully)
That woman Marge...they'll get her to a big hospital. I met a guy I hadn't seen for years, a doctor. He's seeing to it.

ELLIE
He works here?

The very point that troubled CHALLIS.

CHALLIS
Yes, but -- listen, he agrees there's something very -- very wrong going on. He wants to help us.
(He grabs his bag and throws it on the bed)
We can stay at his place.

ELLIE watches as he starts to gather his things into the bag. She looks strangely forlorn.

ELLIE
No.

CHALLIS
What?

ELLIE
I don't want to.

CHALLIS
Ellie --

ELLIE
(whispers)
He works here --

He remembers she was nearly at breaking point during the night. The shock seems not to have left her yet. He moves close to her.

CHALLIS
I know this guy. I've met his wife too. They're good people, they've got two wonderful kids, you've got to see them -- and their house is so -- so -- I mean, you just get there and everything makes sense again! Old Ray really got the luck. All I could feel was -- this is exactly all that I ever -- ! It was strange. So exactly -- !

His voice is thick. He turns his attention to the bag. ELLIE gets to her feet.

ELLIE
I'm not going.

CHALLIS
Ellie, these are friends!

But she is staring at him with an extraordinary expression. As if a chasm has suddenly opened up between them and is widening, moving them apart. There is a kind of distant sound in her voice.

ELLIE
Can't you see?

CHALLIS
See what?

ELLIE
Oh, can't you see? If he's here -- and those feelings -- they made you feel them --

CHALLIS
Ellie. It's not like that.

ELLIE
(a bleak whisper)
It is.

His spine chills. More from her manner than her words. Almost as if she knew something he doesn't. Her wide eyes have an appeal in them.

CHALLIS
Let's go. Let's just get your bag packed and --

He takes a step towards her.

She turns quickly, like a trapped creature trying to escape. She makes for the outer door -- and then turns again -- into the bathroom. She slams the door behind her. And locks it.

CHALLIS is alarmed, remembering his own experience.

CHALLIS
(knocking on the door)
Ellie? Ellie, answer me --

No sound for a moment, and then a most strange one. A faint intermittent cry, shakily pitched. CHALLIS feels a stab of alarm....then realises what this wavering, broken sound is. Tunelessly, ELLIE is singing.

His concern turns to annoyance.

CHALLIS
Okay, I'm going! I'll be back later to pick you up.

74. INT. BATHROOM. DAY.

In the hard artificial light of the bathroom ELLIE is standing with her back to the door. The halting, wordless lilt drifts from her like her breath. She seems hardly aware of it. Her eyes are blurred.

V.O.CHALLIS
(calls)
D'you hear me? Ellie?

A moment later the outer door slams. ELLIE's light, wavering song goes on...

75. INT. CLINIC. INTENSIVE-CARE UNIT. DAY.

CHALLIS turns from the now empty oxygen tent. Everything in the room has been tidied away. All apparatus and bottles have gone. There is no sign there was ever a patient here last night.

As he goes into the passage --

76. INT. CLINIC. PASSAGE. DAY.

-- He encounters the NURSE.

CHALLIS
Is Dr Brickman about?

NURSE
Doctor --

CHALLIS
He was going to check everything before they took her away. I guess he did --

NURSE
Who did you say?

CHALLIS
(losing patience)
Brickman! Dr Ray Brickman.

The NURSE looks uncomfortable.

NURSE
There's no Dr Brickman.

CHALLIS
Oh, come on! I met him right here --

NURSE
Never was.

CHALLIS
We fixed it up then. He took charge. Are you trying to tell me -- ?

Something like fear flickers in the NURSE's eyes.

NURSE
I don't know, sir. P'raps I'm wrong. P'raps when I was off duty --

CHALLIS is on his way out...

77. INT. RENTED CAR. DAY.

CHALLIS is driving fast towards the edge of the little town. He is watching for any landmarks he can remember.

Something looks familiar. He pulls in.

78. EXT. SITE OF BRICKMAN HOUSE. DAY.

CHALLIS gets out of the car. He is deeply puzzled.

It looks like the right spot, the same bend in the road and the great clump of tall trees. There is only one thing wrong.

There is no house.

He glances around. There are no other houses to be mistaken about. He looks again -- and his eyes widen.

ZOOM IN -- on the dead tree.

There is no doubt about it. It is the one he saw before. Ugly and leafless, only yards from the roadside.

CHALLIS walks over to it, across rough and uneven ground -- and puts his hand on the very same bough he saw Ray Brickman touch.

His breath comes fast. All around there are bushes and tall weeds and long grass in ancient tangles. This land has never been built on or even disturbed.

A voice startles him.

CORCORAN
Hello, there --

CHALLIS turns.

A large car, a Cadillac, has pulled in. CORCORAN is in the driver's seat, leaning out of the window.

CORCORAN
A grand spot for a house, this. I've often thought so. You could do a lot worse.

CHALLIS can only stare at him.

CORCORAN
Fine trees. All except that one. That one's dead.

CHALLIS
I know.

He can hardly trust himself to speak. He starts slowly back.

CORCORAN
(affably)
We spoke yesterday. Your name is Challis. I have a memory for names.
(He frowns)
Is anything the matter?

CHALLIS
I'm okay --

CORCORAN
If you've got any problems -- I don't just mean business, I mean any kind -- and people do sometimes -- just come to me personally. Will you do that?

CHALLIS is taken aback by the utter candour blazing from the man's blue eyes.

CHALLIS
Yes, I --

CORCORAN
(quietly)
There's good people here. They'll show you where to find me. Any time --

The window glides shut.

CHALLIS
Mr Corcoran --

But the car is already moving off.....

79. INT. RENTED CAR. APPROACH TO HOTEL. DAY.

As CHALLIS drives back to the hotel he finds a scene of congestion. The attendant FOLEY is struggling to clear it, waving at a departing coach labelled "Airport" and full of weary BUYERS. There is a jam of cars and pickups.

Everybody seems to be leaving.

80. INT. HOTEL LOBBY. DAY.

The last of the BUYERS are milling about in the lobby, most of them in outdoor clothes.

ONE is nursing a black eye. ANOTHER is doggedly market-testing three whoopee-cushions he has laid along a seat and is bouncing up and down on, to extract a variety of squeals and farts.

CHALLIS hurries in and makes for the elevators. One of the doors opens -- and BUDDY KUPFER comes out. He is clutching his bag, and under his arm he is holding a stiff-limbed teddybear. He is glowering.

BUDDY
John! You got to listen to this --

CHALLIS
Not now, Buddy --

But he is borne back relentlessly.

BUDDY
These guys are totally crazy! Look what I got here --
(He hefts the bag and the bear, to pull papers out of his pocket)
You know what these are? My orders for next year. They won't take 'em!

CHALLIS
I've got to go --

But BUDDY grips his arm, drawing him aside.

BUDDY
(confidentially)
The way I do business, I work ahead. A long way ahead. I'm not just interested in next week but next year!

CHALLIS
I know, I know --

BUDDY
You got to plan! I tell them, you're squandering your money, all this last-minute stuff on TV -- just plan it! But no! "No, Mr Kupfer, we do it our way -- "

CHALLIS
You're right -- and now --

BUDDY
Anybody would think this was the last Halloween ever!

CHALLIS (freeing himself)
I got to go --

BUDDY
They tried to fob me off with this damn bear. It pees and sicks like crazy -- but it's a nothing.

CHALLIS makes for the elevator.

81. INT. ELEVATOR. DAY.

CHALLIS scrambles in just as the doors close.

There is a squeal of female protest.

V.O.GIRL
Oooh! Keep your hands to yourself!

V.O.MAN
Never touched you, madam.

V.O.GIRL
I'm warning you...
(Pause, then another squeal)
Oooh! Take that!

A resounding smack.

V.O.MAN
Ow! Keep your hands to yourself, madam!

CHALLIS is alone in the elevator.

82. INT. PASSAGE. DAY.

CHALLIS comes hurrying along the passage. He finds the room door wide open.

83. INT. HOTEL ROOM. DAY.

CHALLIS looks around the room. The bed has been stripped. There is no sign of Ellie or her belongings.

The television set is switched on, its volume low.

CHALLIS
Ellie -- ?

The bathroom door opens. The elderly MAID comes out, carrying an armful of used towels.

MAID
Oh, excuse me, sir --

CHALLIS
Where is she?

MAID
There's no one here. I just had orders to strip the room.

CHALLIS
Did you see her? Did you speak to her?

MAID
I did not. All the things was gone.
(Seeing CHALLIS look towards the television set)
Oh, I put that on. It's a comfort while I'm doin' me work.

CHALLIS looks around for any sign of Ellie.

MAID
I'd better get on --

The phone rings. CHALLIS grabs it.

CHALLIS
Hello? Ellie?

The voice at the other end is a woman's, but it is garbled, almost unintelligible. As if the line is bad on a long-distance call.

CHALLIS
Who is that?
(The shrill note of accusation is familiar, even if the words are blurred)
Linda -- ? Linda, is that you?
(The VOICE babbles straight on. And something occurs chillingly to CHALLIS.)
How did you know I was here? Linda?

The VOICE suddenly cuts off. He puts the phone back, shaken.

The MAID is standing in front of the TV set, studying the picture. It is the commercial...the Halloween figures. And, faintly --

V.O.JINGLE SINGERS
Eight more days to Halloween
Keep watch on your TV screen --

The MAID turns, beaming.

MAID
That's us, ye know. They're made here. Oh, I love Halloween --

Her simple innocence is completely disarming. It is impossible to believe she has been involved in anything.

CHALLIS hurries out.

84. INT. HOTEL LOBBY. DAY.

CHALLIS bursts out of the elevator -- and nearly crashes into BUDDY KUPFER.

CHALLIS
Buddy, have you seen her?

BUDDY
Who?

CHALLIS
Ellie.

BUDDY
No. Listen, John -- what I was saying just now, as a good customer I figure I have a right to feel resentment --

But CHALLIS has made for the reception desk, where the CLERK is busy with papers.

CHALLIS
Remember me? And the girl I was with?

CLERK
I do.

CHALLIS
I'm looking for her.

CLERK
She was here a short while ago.

CHALLIS
Here?

The CLERK looks around the lobby. There are few BUYERS left now. For their benefit the laughter-machine is cackling softly from the loudspeakers. Near the entrance the tall Korean, KIM, is surveying the place as if he owns it. And everybody in it.

CLERK
Maybe she went out.

He goes back to his papers.

Then BUDDY is at CHALLIS's side again, obsessed as the Ancient Mariner. All his joviality has gone and he is angry. He is kneading the toy bear in his hands as if he has completely forgotten what it is. He shakes it like a weapon.

BUDDY
They're holding out on us, John! They got brand-new items stashed away and they won't let us see a one of 'em! I find that insulting. I truly resent it! You know what I've got a mind to do? I mean this, I'm serious -- John?

But he has lost his audience. CHALLIS has outpaced him towards the entrance -- and is walking straight out. Past the blandly smiling KOREAN who is bidding goodbye to one of the BUYERS.

BUDDY
Hell!

In sheer frustration he thumps his fist into the limp bear. It groans.

85. EXT. HOTEL. DAY.

Most of the congested traffic has cleared. The attendant FOLEY is there with his cap tipped back.

CHALLIS
(looking for it)
My car -- did you see who took it?

FOLEY
Was that yours, sir?

CHALLIS
A girl?

FOLEY
No, it was me. Sure, I had to shift it. Give me five minutes --

CHALLIS
No, wait.
(he swallows)
Corcoran --

It is like uttering a code-word. FOLEY's manner seems to change subtly, suddenly alert behind the blandness.

FOLEY
What's that?

CHALLIS
Mr Corcoran. D'you know where he lives?

FOLEY
(quietly)
I do, sir. It's no distance.

He starts pointing directions.....

86. EXT. CORCORAN HOUSE. DAY.

CHALLIS approaches the house on foot.

It is set some distance back from the road, with a good spread of land round it. A characterful building in dark brick, well covered with creeper. The Cadillac is standing outside.

Then...as CHALLIS gets closer...he sees a face. It is watching him through the heavy swags of creeper that hang at the side of the house.

CHALLIS
(catching his breath)
Ellie -- !

He starts to run.

But when he gets closer the face has vanished and there is no sign of anyone. He moves the creeper to see, peering along the side of the house.

CORCORAN
(calls)
Mr Challis.

CHALLIS turns quickly. It is somehow like being caught in the act. CORCORAN has just come out of the front door and is watching him.

CORCORAN
Is something wrong?

CHALLIS
I thought I saw --

CORCORAN
What?

CHALLIS
A girl --

CORCORAN
It'd be one of the maids at work.

He beckons. CHALLIS follows him inside.

87. INT. CORCORAN HOUSE. DAY.

Inside, the house is dark. The small leaded windows overhung with creeper admit little light.

The floor is of bare, dark boards that echo every footstep. There are stout doorframes and overhead beams, all of them richly and intricately carved.

CORCORAN
So you did come.

It seems to please him.

They turn into a wide room with amazing walls, sumptuous with rich, dark colors. A mass of intricate design. Serpents that become trees, and trees that become serpents, all interwoven and interlocked. Older than medieval, more ancient that romanesque too, it is genuinely primitive. There is a religious quality in it, but where saints and angels might be expected there are only sinister shapes. Heaven has been left out. There is only Hell.

CORCORAN
It's all from an abbey in the old country. With a few changes made. I'm not a religious man.

There is an OLD WOMAN sitting close to the open fire. Huddled over a garment she is knitting, something that looks like a cloak made of coarse wool. Her mittened fingers work busily with the needles. She seems too busy to look up.

CORCORAN
She'll pay us no attention.
(To the OLD WOMAN)
Will you?

The OLD WOMAN seems not to hear. She is not a servant, CHALLIS can see. She wears a silk cap, and ancient, faded silk in many ruched layers forms the garment that covers her shoulders. Perhaps she is CORCORAN's mother, or an old aunt. He does not attempt to introduce her or to explain her any further.

CORCORAN
Sit down.

There is heavy furniture all about. Dark and carved in the same intricate patterns. CORCORAN picks up a black, ornamented box.

CORCORAN
D'you smoke?
(He strokes the lid)
Bog oak from the bogs of Ireland.
Now?

CHALLIS draws a deep breath.

CHALLIS
Who is Sam Mayne?

CORCORAN stares.

CORCORAN
Who?

He smiles, more and more broadly. And chuckles aloud.

CHALLIS
(disconcerted)
Who he is -- or was -- if you know anything about him, tell me!

CORCORAN
Samain is not a person, it's a time. You mean to say you didn't -- ? No, obviously you didn't.

CHALLIS
A time?

CORCORAN,
It was the start of the year. In the old countries -- in the old Keltic lands -- well, like Ireland itself. Samain. Otherwise known as...Halloween.

CHALLIS starts. All in a moment a lot of things click together in his mind.

CORCORAN
(smiles)
Which we're busy selling at this moment, eh? Trick or treat, the time of witches and ghosts. But those thousands of years ago it was real. You brought the animals in for the winter, and you never knew what else might come in with them! The dead, looking for a bit of warmth by your fire. Ghosts!
(He waggles his hands beside his head)
Then you would need some craft to keep them out. Witch...craft. Or give them something to go away. Trick them...or treat them. That was Samain. End of lesson. Can I order you some tea?

CHALLIS
No...no, thanks.

CORCORAN
Is there something else?

CHALLIS brings from his pocket the tiny shining thing that was inside one of the Silver Shamrock logos.

CHALLIS
This.

CORCORAN
What is it?

CHALLIS drops it into his hand.

CHALLIS
There's one in every Silver Shamrock badge. On every Halloween toy.

CORCORAN
The button. The little button. They're to do with the fixing --
(Peering at it and rubbing it between his fingers)
It seems okay.

CHALLIS
It's full of micro-electronics.

It is CORCORAN's turn to stare. He throws himself back in his chair with a look of utter disbelief.

CORCORAN
What!

CHALLIS
It opens up.
(He watches as CORCORAN picks almost feverishly at it with his fingernails)
Didn't you know?

CORCORAN has got it open. He peers at the tiny shining contents, holding it a few inches from his nose.

CORCORAN
What on earth -- !

CHALLIS
Who makes them?

CORCORAN
Our other factory, the one in Korea.

CHALLIS
You've got a man over from there --

CORCORAN
Yes. Of course you met him yesterday. Kim.
(Appalled)
D'you really suppose -- ?

CHALLIS
Mr Corcoran. I think there's something going on here that...that you may not know about.

CORCORAN is on his feet, a deeply worried man. He looks again at the scrap of metal in his hand.

CORCORAN
This looks expensive.

CHALLIS
Fifty dollars at least. But it's not just expensive, it's dangerous. Very. Under certain conditions.

CORCORAN looks stunned. He puts the thing carefully down.

CHALLIS
I think you're being used.

CORCORAN
Me? Used -- ?

CHALLIS
There's something on and it's -- big, very big, it's got to be -- !

A doorbell rings. It echoes harshly among the wooden surfaces of the house. CORCORAN looks out of the window.

CORCORAN
A car outside.

A woman's footsteps sound somewhere, heels tapping on the boards. A young woman's footsteps.

CORCORAN
(Calls quickly:)
I'll go myself!
(He turns to CHALLIS)
We'll talk again in a minute, as soon as I've dealt with this. Believe me, Dr Challis, I'm so grateful to you for coming here and warning me. I'd no idea -- !

He hurries out to the front door. CHALLIS stands looking after him, chilled by that one chance word.

CHALLIS
(breathes)
Doctor...Challis...

In that instant everything has been stood on its head. If Corcoran knows exactly who he is....and why he came here...and who came with him....!

There are noisy VOICES at the front door, explaining something to Corcoran or arguing with him. A moment to take advantage of.

CHALLIS goes to the OLD WOMAN in the chair. She is still knitting. She never seems to stop.

CHALLIS
Please -- listen to me. Please!
(Close to her)
Have you seen a young girl?
Brought here today? Have you?
(The OLD WOMAN knits on)
Did you see her?

The OLD WOMAN ignores him. In a burst of anger he grabs at her to pull her round and make her listen --

And her shoulder comes off in his hand!

A mass of dry, rotting silk, and what looks like grey flesh under it, but may not be. The whole body of the OLD WOMAN tips sideways and sways towards him. She utters no sound, no cry of pain.

And her hands keep on knitting. In the same feverish mechanical movement.

She is slipping from the chair. He struggles to get her back into it. Her head droops at an angle no head should be. CHALLIS is beside himself with horror and disgust. He gives a little moan of helplessness as she slides to the floor.

Her hands are still busily knitting.

CORCORAN
What's this?

CHALLIS looks round. CORCORAN is standing there watching, with KIM the tall Korean and DOOLEY. As CORCORAN comes slowly forward his reaction is strange -- not grief nor incredulity nor anger. Instead he chuckles. Then he laughs aloud in a great roar of amusement.

He points.

The OLD WOMAN's head has come right off, rolling into the fireplace. And she is still knitting.

CORCORAN
Dr Challis --.
(So it was deliberate after all)..,
I want you to come with us.
There's a friend of yours in trouble.

CHALLIS
Where is she?

CORCORAN
Did I say she?

CHALLIS gets to his feet. He is too shocked to do anything but go along with them. And he has no choice.

The four MEN leave together.

On the floor there is a small mechanical click from the OLD WOMAN's headless body. The busily knitting hands stop at last.....

88. EXT. FACTORY YARD. DAY.

The Cadillac rolls into the factory yard, past Silver Shamrock trucks and crates. All work has stopped. Forklifts are at a standstill. MEN are staring upwards.

The car stops. O'HARA runs to open the door for CORCORAN. CHALLIS and the others get out too.

CORCORAN
Where is he?

O'HARA points.

CHALLIS
Buddy -- !

A HIGH SHOT takes in BUDDY KUPFER looking down on the staring figures below. He is at the top of a fire-escape, almost at roof level. He is in acute distress, almost weeping. He has even lost his cowboy hat.

CORCORAN detaches himself from the others in the yard and calls up to him.

CORCORAN
(cupping his hands)
Buddy Kupfer! Come down!

BUDDY
I won't! You can't make me!
(He glances nervously around. There is a MAN on the roof just above, OTHERS below him on the fire-escape.)
If you try to get me, I'll jump!

In the yard, CORCORAN turns to CHALLIS.

CORCORAN
You tell him.

CHALLIS
(calls)
Buddy! What's the matter?

And high above, BUDDY peers shortsightedly down. He rubs his eyes.

BUDDY
Who's that? John, is that you?

CHALLIS
Yes!

BUDDY
(despairing)
You on their side! Oh no!

CHALLIS
Buddy, listen to me --

BUDDY
I'm going to jump! I mean that!
I won't let them do it to me!

Below --

CHALLIS (yells)
Do what?
(Turning to the OTHERS)
What's he mean?

CORCORAN
He got in --

O'HARA
Smashed the lock off --

CHALLIS
Where?

CORCORAN just points. The door marked "Strictly No Admittance" is half open.

Above --

BUDDY
(clinging to the rail)
Not to me!
(through sobs)
I saw! I saw...!

CORCORAN
(calls up)
Buddy...

Below --

CORCORAN
(calls again)
Buddy!

BUDDY
(wails)
Anybody come near me -- I'll jump -- !

CORCORAN
(a terrible command)
Jump, Buddy!

And BUDDY obeys.

CHALLIS
(gasps)
Oh no --

He sees the huge body tip over the rail and start to fall. He shuts his eyes. Only hears the smash of BUDDY's 300 pounds into the concrete.

Blood sprays across the ground -- splashes on the door -- spatters a forklift truck. Watching MEN wince.

CORCORAN dabs at droplets on his suit.

CORCORAN
(to O'HARA)
Use that.

He indicates the forklift. O'HARA goes to it.

CHALLIS
(a whisper)
You -- you made him do it -- !

CORCORAN
(complacently)
That's right. Now you're going to see what he saw.
(He takes CHALLIS's arm in a grip that might almost be friendly)
Come on, boy.

As they move towards the "Strictly No Admittance" door, CHALLIS glances back. The forklift truck is trundling across with its scoop lowered, to pick up BUDDY's remains.....

89. INT. SECRET STOREHOUSE. DAY.

It is dark inside, with a low ceiling. They pass through sprung doors with a small warning light glowing above them:"Dust Free Zone".

Then, as might be expected, they are surrounded by high-technology. Television apparatus...cameras, and monitors of different sizes....a control desk for trick effects. Indicator lamps flicker and screens glow faintly.

CHALLIS looks puzzled. There is nothing here to terrify a man out of his wits. Then he sniffs --

CORCORAN goes to the control desk, flicks a switch.

There is a blaze of light overhead, right up to the roof thirty feet above. It illuminates a scene of horror. What look like wicker baskets, a dozen or more, hang suspended at various heights. They are made in coarse open-work so that their contents can be observed. And in every one there is a human being.

All motionless, dead. Most of them are withered as mummies.

A motor hums somewhere. And CHALLIS, noticing movement out of the corner of his eye, spins round -- to find one of the cocoons dropping almost to his level. In it there is a corpse he recognises -- red eyeballs dulled now to crimson, and bloodied skin crusted dark.

CHALLIS (sickened)
Marge -- !

CORCORAN
She shouldn't really be included, she brought it on herself. The others are different.

He presses a button. A motor hums...and another of the wicker shapes starts down.

CORCORAN
This was a man you know of as Bob. Investigative reporter. He brought Grimbridge here.

The cocoon stops. It revolves slowly, swinging at the end of its cable. A collapsed body, a dreadful face.

CORCORAN
Grimbridge got away, as you know. He was unusually resistant to... influence. Bob was...less so.
(Appreciatively)
Does he look familiar? It's a good face, I used it for the Halloween masks. He's in every toy store in America but...his best friends wouldn't really know him.

CHALLIS
(thickly)
You are....evil.

CORCORAN
(unworried)
I might agree with you. It's a matter of definition.

He touches the button again and sends Bob swinging up to his former height.

CORCORAN
Slow death is interesting. The ancient Kelts knew a lot about it. They studied it. There's a kind of concentration of the life force.
(He smiles)
They couldn't use it, though. Now we can.

He touches other switches. A monitor screen brightens. His back is turned to CHALLIS -- who looks quickly round for something to arm himself with. Without making a sound he grabs a heavy steel junction-box from the floor.

CORCORAN
(without turning)
Put it down.
(Now he turns)
There's nothing you can do against me. Try. Go on, try.

CHALLIS tries. In a moment he is panting, straining with effort but he can't even raise his arm. The junction box drops with a thud to the floor.

CORCORAN
I'm what is called an adept. I can do things you can't. I can tell what's going on in your head.
(After a moment)
Go on, ask it.

CHALLIS
Ellie? You've got her?

CORCORAN
Of course.
(Then, as if another question has been asked, he shakes his head)
I can't tell you that.

CHALLIS
But why -- ?
(Shakily)
You pick things out of my mind --

CORCORAN
What else?

CHALLIS starts -- at the sudden appearance nearby of the BRICKMAN family. RAY, HELEN and the two CHILDREN, sitting close together in a fond group, breaking into smiles, much as he last saw them.

CHALLIS
You made them!

CORCORAN
You made them -- in the first place. And crudely, they're so obvious. You really do feel the world has cheated you.

The BRICKMANS have faded to transparency, and now disappear altogether.

CHALLIS
You tormented me!

CORCORAN
You asked for it. You've got a wife, two children of your own. You don't like them, do you?

CHALLIS
(defiantly)
No! Not any more --

CORCORAN chuckles.

CORCORAN
In the circumstances that's just as well.

Another flick of a switch. The biggest monitor screen brightens into a commercial. The Jack-o-Lanterns and the horror masks -- one of which is now all too recognisable as Bob the investigative reporter.

JINGLE SINGERS
SEVEN days to Halloween!
This is what it's going to mean --
If you buy us you are wise!
You are sure to get a PRIZE!
Buy -- Silver Shamrock!

CHALLIS
What's....the prize?

CORCORAN darkens the screen.

CORCORAN
(thoughtfully)
You see, in those days...so much was known...but so little could come of it.
(He turns to CHALLIS, nods agreement with his thought)
Yes, I am old. Older than you'd probably guess.
(He waits a moment. Then, encouragingly:)
Oh, well done. And now to have the benefits of modern technology -- I can't tell you what it means to me!

He opens the lid of a small flat wooden crate. It is very precisely made and labelled to the factory, and stamped with Customs clearances. He folds aside the protective layers of bubble-plastic beloved of Oriental packers. And takes out a handful of Silver Shamrock badges.

CORCORAN
Fifty thousand in here, all ready for use. Surplus to requirements.
(As CHALLIS keeps his distance)
Quite harmless. Unless triggered off prematurely.
(He indicates the cocooned corpse of MARGE)
That fool used batteries.

CHALLIS
What's inside them?

CORCORAN
But you told me, Dr Challis -- a microchip and a fuel cell. When you came to save me -- !
(For a moment he splutters with amusement, then he holds one of the things up)
Oh, there's a lot more. What's in there is life.

CHALLIS
Alive -- ?

CORCORAN
A fragment of living matter, cloned, compressed to unbelievable power --
(A memory like a dark cloud drifts through his mind for a moment)
-- So far from the time when you -- stood among the stones and -- called and called -- yet nothing -- !
(The moment passes, eerily. He holds one up.)
And now this....! There's a good American word that would do for it. A madstone.

CHALLIS
(numbly)
I've never heard it.

CORCORAN
A charm or the like. It'll do.
(He seems to pick up a thought)
I'll show you.
(He drops the things back in their crate and turns again to the control desk.)
The Halloween special! To go out that night and only that night.
(He grins as he flicks switches)
They say there's a ham in all of us --

This time the commercial on the big monitor shows CORCORAN himself, his beaming face filling the screen. His Irish brogue, which has seemed to drop away from him while he has been talking to CHALLIS, is laid on thick.

CORCORAN
(on screen)
Hello there, children! It's the Silver Shamrock man again! Be with me at 9 o'clock — and have your Silver Shamrock toy in your hand! To claim your prize!

The screen goes blank. CORCORAN turns.

CORCORAN
Guessed? You have! In front of every TV screen in the country there will be eager, greedy little faces -- millions of them -- !

CHALLIS
(in agony)
Why? Why?

CORCORAN must have flicked another switch, because the whole place suddenly echoes with the same huge mechanical laugh that was heard in the hotel. The laugh of the joker.

CHALLIS makes a terrible effort. He lunges at the other man. But his feet move as if they were clogged in tar, and his raised arms weigh a ton each.

And in front of him there is nothing but CORCORAN's eyes.....

90. INT. SECRET STOREROOM. NIGHT.

Strange and subjective now...as if seen from the inside of a stunned mind. CHALLIS's.

The CAMERA PANS slowly...across moving FIGURES that are distorted and discolored...and comes to a stop, and PANS BACK AGAIN just as slowly. As if it is looking from one of the wicker cocoons. Which is indeed the case.

As it moves...the FIGURES come close to peer with a kind of satisfaction. Looming close, fisheye. So distorted they are barely recognisable...CORCORAN... KIM...O'HARA...FOLEY...RAFFERTY...the HOTEL MAID.....

91. INT. SECRET STOREROOM. NIGHT.

Another night.

Little perceptible movement from the CAMERA now, just a feeble, erratic bobbing. But now the wicker cocoon must have been drawn high up towards the roof. It is looking far down....to where a circle of FIGURES are standing, distorted as before. They seem to be holding lights or flares, and these too are distorted, seeming to become part of the FIGURES, who number about a dozen.

Downwards now...as if the cocoon is being lowered... and there are faces on the FIGURES, looking up. The same faces, with the same gloating look as before.

And in the middle of their circle is a GIRL....

92. INT. SECRET STOREROOM. DAY.

CORCORAN, in hard focus now, leans foward.

CORCORAN
Come on. It's time to wake and enjoy the fun!

One of the wicker shapes has been lowered right to the floor.

CHALLIS is inside it. He is in terrible shape, starved almost to emaciation. His lips are dry and cracked and there is a week's growth of beard on his face. He moans frantically.

CORCORAN
(picking up the thought)
Water? Here's water --

He pushes a cup in between the tough stalks of wicker, which set just wide enough to prevent escape, should the occupant have the strength to attempt it.

CHALLIS grabs the cup with trembling hands and gulps the water, spilling most of it. He is almost dehydrated.

CORCORAN
Sure, it's Halloween, so it is.

CHALLIS
(confusedly)
Ha'ween -- ?

CORCORAN
It's tonight. It's now.
(pityingly)
You've been out of it all for a week. Look at you, the state you're in.

CHALLIS runs a shaky hand over his face, feeling the lumpy lips and the beard growth. He gives a little groan.

CHALLIS
A week?

CORCORAN
Come on, smarten up. There's a lady here to see you.

And there is ELLIE.

She seems still to be wearing her nightdress, or a garment just as plain. And the look on her face is the distant, lost expression she had when we last saw her.

CHALLIS
Ellie --

She turns and sees him. She frowns as if she is trying to work out what he is doing on the floor in a wicker cage and her brain is not up to it. Then tears spring into her eyes.

CORCORAN
She has a kind heart. She was telling me of the little bird her daddy gave her and she set free.

ELLIE
Tweet, tweet --

CORCORAN (smiling)
That's right. She's like a child.

CHALLIS
What have you done to her?

CORCORAN
Be grateful, she's come to watch with you. Let's open this up so you can see better --
(He picks up a long knife and slashes at some of the wicker stems)
Just a bit, not too much. How's that?

He drops the knife and turns the wicker cage to point CHALLIS at the monitor screens. They are alight with several channels....old westerns in black-and-white, a news program, a culture spot.

CORCORAN
There it is, a normal evening's dull television. Except that this is Halloween.
(checking his watch)
In just a moment --

It is break time. His own face suddenly fills every screen. He turns the sound up.

CORCORAN
(on screens)
Hello there, children! It's the Silver Shamrock man again! Be with me at 9 o'clock -- and have your Silver Shamrock toy in your hand! To claim your prize!

Another commercial follows...hamburgers slopping with gravy...but he lowers the sound. There is fervent excitement in his face.

CHALLIS
What happens...at 9 o'clock?

CORCORAN
This!

He flips a switch. The biggest monitor screen, standing on its own nearby, lights up. It is CORCORAN's face again, but very close indeed, just eyes and mouth filling the screen.

CORCORAN
(on monitor screen)
Time! It's time! All those lucky kids with Silver Shamrock toys, hold them up -- close to the TV screen! Close to me!

Starting from Corcoran's eyes in the TV image, a rapid patterning fills the frame. Concentric circles spin and judder, with vertical bars cutting across them, running and repeating...and repeating...

CORCORAN
I've bought two minutes of time. That should be enough.
(He turns to CHALLIS)
You're asking why? Why do it? And my answer is...mischief.

CHALLIS
(in disbelief)
Is that...all?

CORCORAN
Dr Challis...mischief is what rules the world. It always has. It comes in two sizes, little and big. This is the big kind. Its practitioners are the great men of history. It's what we do, Dr Challis. It's what we do best.
(After a moment)
I'll get you more water. You spilt it --

Numbly, CHALLIS passes him the cup. CORCORAN goes out of sight -- and immediately CHALLIS pulls himself together.

CHALLIS (whispers)
Ellie! Ellie -- the knife!
(He points to it on the floor)
Give it to me! Quick!

ELLIE hesitates, blank-eyed, for a moment. Then as if some surge of her own identity has come back she acts. She picks up the knife and passes it through to CHALLIS. He starts frenziedly hacking at the wicker frame.

A few yards away, in the darkness behind a bank of electronic apparatus, CORCORAN is watching.

Wicker strands split under the knife. CHALLIS tears at them, extending the hole. It is almost big enough for him to escape through --

CORCORAN comes back.

CORCORAN
(pityingly)
Put it down.
(As if he has lost volition
CHALLIS drops the knife)
A little test...
(He turns to ELLIE)
I was putting her to. And she failed it. Or passed it. Depending on the point of view.

He touches a switch on the control desk. Lights brighten above.....and they are all visible, the watching COVEN. KIM and O'HARA and FOLEY and RAFFERTY and the HOTEL MAID and the OTHERS. All waiting, an expectant audience.

CORCORAN
I did explain. She is curiously resistant to...influence. Like her late father in that.

Heads nod. CHALLIS twists round in his cage to see them.

CORCORAN
Now, Ellie --

CHALLIS
What are you going to do to her?

CORCORAN
Dr Challis, you wanted to know exactly how...it works. I'll show you. Ellie --

He lifts the open crate of Silver Shamrock badges and offers it to her. Like offering a child sweets.

CHALLIS
No --

CORCORAN
Take one, Ellie. Take any one.

She picks one. And holds it up as if she has not seen one before. CORCORAN turns her towards the big monitor screen.

And touches the controls. It is the trigger commercial that fills the screen.

CORCORAN
(on monitor screen)
Time! It's time! All those lucky kids with Silver Shamrock toys, hold them up -- close to the TV screen! Close to me!

CORCORAN
Do it, child.

CHALLIS
(choking)
Ellie-e-e-e!

She holds the madstone up to the screen. The juddering pattern starts...circles and bars....

The madstone seems to explode in her hand. A shrill sound and something like a living spark -- that makes straight towards her face.

She has hardly time to cry out.

The watching COVEN are on their feet, enthralled.

ELLIE's eyes are shut tight. When she opens them they are the colour of blood. Her skin is flushed scarlet and her mouth is wide in a dreadful rictus. The breath is roaring out of her. Teeth splinter with the force of it. Her blonde hair flutters in shreds.

CHALLIS can't look. He buries his face in his hands, wailing.

CORCORAN is enthralled by the sight. The OTHERS are moving down, getting closer to enjoy it.

CORCORAN
Think of that -- in fifty million homes!
(He turns to his COMPANIONS)
Sure, it'll be a good one, the last Halloween -- !

But suddenly the faces change expression. Something is wrong. CORCORAN turns quickly.

ELLIE is standing with her blood-red hands thrust into the crate. She lifts them...each full of the Silver Shamrock madstones. And from her shattered mouth --

ELLIE
Tweet, tweet -- !

She turns to the big monitor screen with its patterning signal. She holds up her hands.

ELLIE
Tweet - tweet --

She tosses the exploding madstones with the same little gesture with which she freed the bird.

They flash and zip, finding targets.

PEOPLE scream. The horror is upon them. And ELLIE's hands go blindly after more, grovelling and clutching in the crate. And tossing them.

CORCORAN stands like a column of blood, blinded. All round him the OTHERS are being struck.

CHALLIS struggles frenziedly to free himself from the wicker.

The crate is like a box of fireworks into which a match has been dropped. Thousands of the madstones are moving, flashing into light like a swarm of fireflies. But stinging and stabbing.

CORCORAN seems to be swelling to monstrous size, towering above his companions. From his ragged, distended mouth comes a bellow of laughter -- like the mechanical laugh heard so often but now the product of huge, torn lungs. As if the joke has turned out funnier than he intended in all his thousands of years -- !

CHALLIS is crawling, dragging his weak body desperately along. Behind, the whole storehouse sounds as if it is exploding...in its own way. An uproar of obscene noises...of farting, squealing, howling... and always and always.....laughter, among the screams.

There are flames now. And duller, more recognisable sounds of things exploding. And things falling.

The whole roof of the factory is caving in. Down come the wicker pods, swinging upon one another, with their dreadful horror masks inside but which were once human. And below, a huge spillage of Halloween toys... witches' hats and Jack-o-Lanterns and the rest.

Somewhere among them, ELLIE lies broken and dead....

93. EXT. GAS STATION. NIGHT.

A small gas station at the side of a lonely road.

Out of the darkness comes a grotesquely painted van, driven wildly. As it skids to a halt beside the gas station we see it is the late Buddy Kupfer's vehicle.

CHALLIS, a filthy and ragged figure, tumbles out of the driving seat. He halts warily at the sight of a MAN emerging towards him from the lighted booth. For a desperate moment he waits, heart thumping. But there is no need to wait to hear this man speak. He is black.

CHALLIS nearly throws himself on his neck.

CHALLIS
Can I -- use your phone? It's -- life and death --

GAS STATION MAN
Sure, man --

CHALLIS goes running.

94. INT. GAS STATION BOOTH. NIGHT.

Minutes later CHALLIS is telephoning. He is keeping one eye on a small battered TV set on a shelf nearby. It is showing an old western movie.

CHALLIS
(in torment)
For God's sake -- put me on to somebody in authority! Quick! You've got to.....Hello? Listen, there's a commercial going out at nine o'clock -- it's got to be stopped, on all channels! Yes! Yes! Who am I? Who -- who -- You've got to believe me, please!
(Suddenly CORCORAN's face appears on the TV screen, in the warm-up commercial)
We've got ten minutes!
(Struggling for self-control)
Listen...carefully. I'll tell you what it can do...

The GAS STATION MAN comes into the doorway, watching. There are CHILDREN with him...two or three of his own and one or two white children. All them have Halloween toys.

Each with a Silver Shamrock on it.....

END